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WHEN NORTH WINDS BLOW

by

WALTER EMERSON

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The Robinsons
of Rockaleen –

With kind regards and
many pleasant memories.

Walter Emerson

October 21, 1928

When North Winds Blow

WHEN NORTH WINDS BLOW

By

WALTER EMERSON

Illustrated

Lewiston Journal Company
Lewiston, Maine
1922

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TRAVEL BOOKS

By WALTER EMERSON

The Latchstring

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When North Winds Blow

The Maine Lake Country—Six great groups — Sebago — Rangeley — Belgrade — Moosehead — Fish River — Grand Lakes. Illustrated.

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Maine's seacoast and seacoast towns—Deepwater ships and sailors—Romance of the North Atlantic. Illustrated.

(In Preparation)

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KINEO RISES ABRUPTLY AND IN MAJESTY SEDATE 760 FEET RIGHT OUT OF THE CENTER OF MOOSEHEAD LAKE

CHAPTER I

Seeing Things at Home

CHAPTER I

Seeing Things at Home

ONE glorious day last June I sat enraptured on the green shores of the Lakes of Killarney. The beauty of the scene before me, hill on hill, trees towering on trees, all mirrored in the glass of still waters, was wonderful to behold, inspiring, completely satisfying. And all around the background of Irish history, wild, romantic, poetic, warlike, stern and real.

Then, next day, across to the English lakes, a placid panorama revealing groomed and dignified beauty, stolid, characteristic of the great nation—the very name Windermere suggesting centuries of aristocracy, grace and gentle stability.

At evening of the following day—for I was traveling fast and light—I watched the sunset across Lake Geneva from the shores of Montreux, the Bernese Alps behind me and sombre Chillon just across the bay. At sunrise I breakfasted at Interlaken and, before the first pipe, had been up and down Thun and Brienz and enjoyed all the grandeur that was Swiss.

Beyond the Alps lay Como and Garda and scores of smaller Italian lakes, country seats of the mighty, scenes of grand enchantment. I was there, too, in a few hours, sailing, rowing, motoring along the most picturesque inland waterways in all the world. Always lunching in the open, now on a glorious

tramp up the mountain woodlands, now sitting on some medieval balcony and absorbing such scenery as only Italy can unfold. Contented, at peace with the world, thoroughly delighted.

Wonderful days were these! Rare nights! Such journeyings! And such guides!

For I did all this by way of the best of literature, inspired and charmed by great authors of far-famed powers of observation and description, and artists who sketched with enthusiasm and reproduced with fidelity.

Travels immediately preceding had taken me to the South Sea Islands with Frederick O'Brien and other descriptive writers, who, following Stevenson years after, found new beauties offshore in the Pacific and revived the interest kindled by the master. For weeks I had been tossed about on storm-swept waters in redolent sloops and small schooners, sustaining life on hardtack, native grasses and cocoanut oil; always driven ashore in the booming surf to be finally rescued half dead and, fortunately, half-blind, by a dark-skinned princess who happened at that particular time to be bathing in a near-by pool. It seems to be a happy and hospitable custom of the South Seas for sunburned daughters of the king to bathe within easy rescuing distance of dangerous reefs and in times of hurricane when wrecks are frequent; a sort of never-sleeping, ever-ready national coast guard whose specialty is the camera-bearing American magazine writer. Many times

had I been taken, water-soaked, from the waves to be dried out in the royal kitchen, revived at the royal dining table and then entertained by interpretative nature dancing on the royal lawn; the princess, of course, in the double role of first aid to the shipwrecked and Terpsichore. I had a wonderful cruise too, with Dr. Traprock.

But I was all choked up with the South Seas, and when this opportunity came for travel in the European lake country, I welcomed it as a relief and a return to the calm of civilized emotion.

I did all this thoroughly, classic literature, some literature that was not classic, guide books, some of which were literature, some of which were not, photographs, maps and all—so thoroughly that when I sailed from Genoa homeward bound I had a sense of duty well done, sighed complete satisfaction and knew I had seen it all.

And then, high noon, one glorious October day, I sat in state and reality on the hornstone peak of Mount Kineo, which, you will bear in mind, rises abruptly and in majesty sedate seven hundred and sixty feet, right out of the centre of Moosehead Lake.

Up in Maine—or down in Maine—whichever you like.

I have noted with increasing interest and curiosity the use of both expressions. A man in Massachusetts or New York, for instance, coming on busi-

ness bent almost always says, "Down in Maine," or "Down East," and this adverb has thus come to carry the taint of commercialism; faintly, perhaps, and not with complete justification, but I have often felt it, and once felt it has grown into unconscious influence. Coming here on a holiday, fishing or shooting, or camping, or canoeing, or, best of all, for a whole season of rest and recreation, the same man is more likely than not to say "Up in Maine." I like this better. And for no reason in the world except that it suggests pleasure instead of business, the careless, boundless joy of all outdoors instead of the narrow, calculating game of trying to sell something.

And so, since we are not engaged in prosaic barter and hurrying from town to town in order to Sunday in Bangor, but, quite the contrary, are avoiding towns, loitering along unbeaten paths and discovering new trails, with the whole grand northern summer before us and all cares behind, let us for the purpose of this modest book of suggestion say "Up in Maine."

At least, we were up in Maine when we digressed into this consideration of terms—well up, nearly eight hundred feet up, and commanding a view the likes of which cannot be found in all these Eastern states. The tip-top of Mount Washington, I know quite well, affords a wider range and grander view of mountain scenery. But it is mountain scenery and no more. Katahdin, four thousand feet higher

than Kineo, in view on the clearest of days, overlooks a greater number of lakes and streams, and more hills. But here on the peak of this magnificent rock you seem to have emerged, like an aviating mermaid, right out of the water and perched on a mountain-top, with charming prospect north, east, south and west. Of course there are no inland mermaids and the simile may be inaptly drawn, but I herewith mark "stet" just to try it on my friends. And, as one of my real author acquaintances once remarked when I asked him for an autograph copy, "if your friends don't buy your books, who will?"

As I read over this copy preparatory to sending it to a patient and mind-reading typist, I find an apparently careless expression which the Appalachians will be likely to criticise. Mountain scenery and no more! "What more, pray?" they may ask. And as I remember the grandeur of the view of and from the Presidential Range, I find it hard to answer. I have no quarrel with "mountain scenery and no more." I offer neither comparison nor contrast. There is certainly nothing monotonous about it. It has all the variety that any nature lover can possibly desire, all the inspiration that any expert on scenery can ever expect. Ravine, escarpment, peak on peak, valley after valley, hard woods, soft woods, no woods at all; perhaps on rare days the faintest glimpse of the ocean itself—at least a pleasant marine imagination—everything to satisfy one with an eye to the grand and picturesque. That is, almost

everything. There is no sheet of water in the immediate foreground, no considerable level space to set off the charm of irregularity, no mirror to reflect the foliage of the seasons. When you have these, all in an inland sea spreading out from the base of your elevation, you have painted the mountain scenery lily. And why not?

So I sat there on Kineo all that livelong afternoon, attuned to the time, the place and the view—and wondered. A north wind was blowing down the lake from Seboomook, now in little black puffs, scooting here and there over the water, now in greater force, pushing whitecaps down toward Sugar Island and distant Greenville. It was one of those crystal fall days when everything stands out in sharp outline; when the air itself seems effervescent. North and South the lake reaching out with long arms. There were Spencer Bay and the Spencer Mountains, Lily Bay and the Lily Bay Mountains, Big and Little Squaw; behind me the Northeast and the Northwest, gateways of sportsmen and the lumbermen; to the west, Moose River winding up to Brassua; and then on and on into that great range, little talked about and little written about, that marks the boundary between the States and the land of Frontenac.

And I wondered—wondered at the beauty of it all, at the primeval wildness, at the calm and peace and satisfaction that came through the sense of sight alone.

Seeing Things at Home

And then, too, I wondered—an immediate result —wondered if we here at home fully realize what home has for us—all it has for us in variety of beauty and grandeur, in inspiring scenery of land and water, in pleasant and healthful stimulation that comes from marked change of seasons. Poets have sung of Maine and its charms, novelists have described it, official reports have become delightful books of travel in "enumerating" its "advantages." I do not presume to rush in where such as these have fearfully trodden. But I cannot refrain from rising up here on Mount Kineo to remark that we have something here at home worth seeing in the matter of natural display. One must see it to feel it, feel it to really appreciate it.

Curiously enough, I have in the mail of this very morning a letter and landscape photograph from a friend in far-off Cadenabbia, who is not doing Italy but is living there, living there an American-born Italian citizen, because, as he puts it, the Eighteenth Amendment is an abridgment of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. And, stranger still, he never drank a drop of alcoholic liquor, wine or beer in his life. He writes charming verses about people and events and describes scenery with a master hand.

Of course it is a colored photograph of Como, Como the incomparable—great mountains dipping down into the blue waters of the lake, wonderful trees, green fields and hills, red-tiled towers,

chateaux that seem to have grown with the grape-vines out of the landscape, and, nestling way over in one corner, the little red and white village, whose villagers are sailing about the little harbor with fruit and flowers and probably artistic village smiles.

I have unconsciously copied his expression, for he writes at the bottom of this enchanting picture: "Beyond description. You have to sort of feel it. (Signed) Pig." "Pig," I suppose, because he has a guilty feeling, that guiltiest of all feelings, selfishness, because he is enjoying the grand Italian lake country while I am only up in Maine.

It takes nothing from his enjoyment of the glories of Como if I send him this postcard which depicts Moosehead just as I saw it that wonderful afternoon. And I am tempted to descend from my eminence and express my feelings just as I ought in proper resentful vernacular, so I scribble diagonally across the card, beginning at Rum Pond and ending at the outlet of Nigger Brook: "Dear Pig: You have nothing on me."

Except, perhaps, as I now reflect, in the matter of names, Bellagio, Vallambrosia, Cremona, San Reno, Verona, Como—even Cadenabbia—there is cadence about them that suggests beauty and romance, high sounds of history and mystery, and the revengeful stiletto, while there is no rhythmical flow to Squa Pan, Haymock, Lower Roach, Daggett, and Mud. There is nothing even gastronomically

pleasant about the name of Lobster Lake. It is disassociation at its worst. But lobsters and Monhegan Island, lobsters and Damariscove—ah, that's different!

I take these Maine lake country names at random from memory and check up by the maps. The Indians, of course, made the first applications, and when they spoke their own language there was significance and melody; for instance, Millinocket, Onawa, Allegash, Umbazookus, and—will you believe it—Chemquasabamticook. But when the early settlers came and attempted a mixture of Abnaki and early settler English, they became very plain and practical. A single incident probably named Rum Pond and Nigger Brook. They long ago lost their import, for there is no rum at the pond and nothing dark about the brook. I am still curious about Stink Pond, and still think it a libel. It is just a plain, simple, every-day pond way up beyond Chamberlain Lake, not very interesting, unobtrusive, and certainly unolfactory.

It detracts nothing from pleasurable contemplation of all the scenic wonders of foreign lands if, both before and after, we look about a bit at home. And then—think of it—what a compensation if, by some untoward circumstance such as lack of time, or inclination to travel, possibly money, we are denied these grand enchantments abroad, what a relief to find close at hand, within the confines of our own State, often sitting in our own dooryard, much that

Italy and Switzerland and England and Ireland offer and some things they do not offer. Not the grand, serried ranks of beauty, perhaps, not the centuries of historical background, not the highest peaks, but a spread-out, never-ending series of natural phenomena pleasing to all the senses at all seasons, and of infinite variety. There are no monotones, here. Rather inspiring, too, as you indulge that very human feeling of local pride and proprietorship.

"Observation of nature, love of beautiful things, delight in noble literature, gratitude for the highest forms of wit and humor, sympathy with all sorts and conditions of men, reverence for the majesty of the universe, kindness to all, love of children and devotion to the home, these operations of the human spirit bring peace to the heart of man and continue their ministrations to his happiness with an increasing power of joy as his personality enlarges itself to receive the highest revelations of Life."

This I read last night in the conclusion of "The Mirrors of Downing Street." I am greatly impressed as a whole, and in particular that he places, first of all, observation of nature in his enumeration of the virtues of the elect. And, after all, how simple, how truthful, and why not?

Sitting one morning on his verandah with my old neighbor, the Rev. Dr. Charles T. Morgan, and looking up and down one of the finest bits of the Maine coast, politics palled as we talked, even news of the

great war ceased for a time to inspire. And he was so intense on both!

"Ah, Dr.," I exclaimed, "I'd be a better man, almost as good as you, if I had that view all the time."

"Come over oftener, come over oftener," he replied, with the quick Scotch wit that never failed him.

So observe ye nature! And if not with due contrition, if for no more than to please the senses, we will in time receive unconscious influence and revelation will come. I sometimes think we ought to be better even than we are up here in Maine. There is so much nature to observe. All the opportunity in the world is here, everything that the temperate zone can offer. We touch the north and the south. Arctic birds come here to meet those of the tropics. Flora is almost without limit, as endless as Gray's Botany itself.

"I wonder," said Dallas Sharp one day at Squirrel Island, "if you people realize the number and variety of warblers that summer here. And do you appreciate such a garden spot of wild flowers?"

Probably not. But this morning I saw a wood thrush, vesper sparrow, warblers black and white, bay-breasted, black-throated, green, chestnut-sided, parula and magnolia, disport in a very crude bird bath under my window. And close by a royal and

six other varieties of ferns nodded to the southwest breeze.

"There is music in the bellow of the blast." Winslow Homer came here, and lived here, to paint our fogs. And, during the May and June of 1921, an eight-weeks' succession of clear, sunny days actually got on my nerves. We hardly had a respectable dew. Green strawberries dropped off the vines, and that is enough to get on anyone's nerves. But year in and year out, take an average of half a dozen for example, the variety of weather excels anything for the enjoyment of both pleasure and business to be found in any state in the Union, except, of course, that of our fortunate neighbors in New England.

Artists were the forerunners of the resort industry in Maine. Trade followed the paint brush. I find this in picking up bits of history here and there, written and unwritten, and the confirmation is fairly complete. They came here in the forties and fifties, even before Thoreau. One of them, more artistic and venturesome than the others, sailed along the coast one summer and camped on Mount Desert Island. And is there a spot so glorious, so rich in variety of scenery on the whole Atlantic Coast? To see was but to paint. Others followed. Soon there were sketches in black and white, rather odd things in oils, bits of landscape and marines that at first seemed imaginative rather than real—these were exhibited in such grand centers of culture and wealth as New York, Philadelphia and Boston.

Seeing Things at Home

Mountains rising out of the surf—not Athos emerging six thousand feet out of the Ægean, but everyday, human mountains, mountains you finally felt must be there; waters of reality; Schooner Head, Otter Cliff, Somes's Sound, Jordan's Pond.

People of culture and means to indulge it, people who loved nature in the simple and the grand, saw these representations and wondered if there was such beauty in a day's travel. They came out of curiosity to see, and remained to live, and rest and enjoy. The great resort was founded. Then, in a few years, came men and women who drew pen pictures, words aglow, like Charles Dudley Warner, who said among other things in his writings that there was undeniably a public opinion in Bar Harbor in favor of it. And the great resort was established.

Oftentimes we wait for some observing foreigner to make discoveries, and even then we awaken slowly. They come, skip and dine about merrily for a few days, go home and write. The magazines do the rest. Seeing America from an express sleeper, or a high powered motor at forty miles an hour has become a pleasant and profitable pastime for writing Englishmen. How much we enjoyed Dr. Arnold Bennett's United States, clicked out on a typewriter on a Twentieth Century journey from New York to Chicago. Mr. W. L. George hails and farewells, magazine and book of many pages. And yet, they see much we do not see ourselves. I have just found

this from Mr. William Archer, entertaining critic, dramatist and traveller:

"Not long ago, journeying from Massachusetts into New Hampshire, I found a train following for hours a beautiful river for whose existence I was quite unprepared. Inquiring its name, I learned it was the Merrimac, and was further informed that it drove more spindles than any other river in the world. A little later, business took me to Binghamton, N. Y., and again a beautiful river lent dignity to an otherwise undistinguished town. Once more I had to confess my ignorance. This was the Susquehanna, just entering the State of Pennsylvania on its way to Chesapeake Bay.

"Yet, these are, so to speak, hole and corner rivers not to be compared to the great arteries of the continent. The superb expanse of the Hudson puts the Rhine and Danube to shame. No less grandiose than romantic is the confluence at Pittsburg of the Allegheny and Monongahela, with the tiny little block house of Fort Pitt still occupying the tip of the tongue of land, overshadowed by the giant buildings of the City of Steel. And the Allegheny and Monongahela unite in the mighty Ohio, and the mighty Ohio itself is but a tributary of the still mightier Mississippi, the Father of Waters. Without any disrespect to the Nile, the Euphrates, or the Ganges, great rivers of the past, I venture to find these great rivers of the future every bit as thrilling to the imagination."

Seeing Things at Home

Without any disrespect to Killarney, Windermere, Geneva and Como, great lakes of the past, I venture to find these great lakes of the home country every bit as thrilling to the imagination, as pleasing to the senses, every bit as rich in all that is vital and stimulating in outdoor life. Not the grandeur of great elevation, still picturesque; virgin waters, the forests primeval. Not the romance and history brought down by the written word, still centuries of legend and mystery of an aboriginal race, red-skinned and red-blooded, and almost as interesting as the Romans of old.

CHAPTER II
Road Fever

NAPLES VILLAGE—A SABBATH SERENITY PERVADES THE WHOLE SEBAGO REGION

CHAPTER II

Road Fever

IF I WERE to come to Maine for a week or a season and then go back into the whirlpool of tall buildings, stock-tickers and quick lunches, or perchance to the halls of the erudite, I should carry first of all an impression that I had lived with nature, that I had, for a time at least, fulfilled that destiny of complete wildness which sooner or later all humans crave. I should feel the uplift of the sense of elbow-room and other forms of freedom, and, sunburned and comfortably muscle-bound, should lord it over unfortunate friends who had been somewhere else or stayed at home. Quite certain, I should have this feeling, whether I had camped in the open, farmed with the farmers, or gloriously idled in a modern summer villa.

Occasional return to first principles, temporary reversion to the animal type, is as much a part of human advancement as reading, and writing, and electric lights, and motor cars. It relieves the strain and monotony of continual progress and gives foundation and background to civilization. If we had no opportunity to indulge the primitive instinct now and then, if all were artificial and nothing natural, there would be no stepping stones to the light.

What a pleasure and satisfaction it is to get down on your hands and knees and drink out of a

spring, just as the Indians drank, or for that matter just as a horse drinks. Not only does it not take away from the luxury of cut glass, but it adds to its value. A few nights on hemlock boughs, roasted deermeat on a stick and a blackened coffee-pot enhance the Sybaritic enjoyments of a Copley-Plaza. Who so dull that he does not delight in contrasts?

This is the first impression one gets up here in Maine—contrast, something different. Dividing itself into these sub-impressions: the immediate sense of relief and rest, that let-down from high tension and hurry and struggle; freedom and leisure to see and hear, to live and enjoy living; the broadening sense of openness, out-of-doors, sun and air, and wind and rain, and snow and ice; the intimate association with nature, its wonderful simplicity and all that it teaches, the lessons of the birds and animals and countless insects, the flowers and trees, the ferns and mosses, shrubs and grasses, lessons even of the lowly weeds; and those grander manifestations, change of seasons, change of weather, landscape, sunsets, floods, drought. Think of having time and opportunity for observation of all of these, not to say study.

Ah, but will I have the inclination? you ask. You can't avoid it. Try as you might, you couldn't escape it. It comes automatically with opportunity, seeds itself year after year, grows in strength and variety. All it needs is the average soil of common humanity, the moisture of natural observation and

the sunlight of splendid leisure. Destiny, foreordination—anything you like, but it is sure to come.

A friend of mine got on a train in Wiscasset the other day and did not come into the open again till he emerged at his own door in Brooklyn, with several changes meantime, steam trains, ferries and subway cars; and breakfast at the Biltmore. But then, there are donkeys in the Pennsylvania coal mines that never come into the sunlight at all. I never seemed to know in Boston whether it was raining or not. Had no care, unless it was Saturday afternoon and there was a good game at the Stadium. I read of the moon in the Maine Farmers' Almanac and now and then heard rumors about the stars.

So when I got home again I just naturally and unconsciously took to the open. Roamed the hills, rowed the lakes, walked up and down this wonderful seacoast, sat for hours on the rocks and sands, sailed the bays and inlets. Unfettered, out from under the dead weight of a great city, carefree. The buoyancy almost of youth again. And I stepped up to life just as the .300 hitter steps up to the plate after swinging superfluous bats and then throwing off the handicap. The established process of progress was reversed. The complications of congested civilization had been but necessary aids. Appreciation of real living had come only after treading the mazes. The impressive lesson of contrasts.

When North Winds Blow

This wide expanse of mowed field before me, rolling on and on in sweep of natural curves—it is beautiful. No less so that solid bank of forest where cultivation ends and wildness begins. All the evergreens, the symmetrical spruce, pine, hemlock, the infrequent hackmetack; and the handsome hard woods, the beech,—perhaps handsomest of all—maple, birch, yellow, gray and white, oak and ash. And it is mid-fall and the fields are brown and dead leaves are falling and blowing in the cold northwest wind. Yet there is charm and beauty and grandeur that cannot be written. Try to communicate them by the spoken word and the full effect is gone. Both—field and forest alike—are beautiful. But neither without the other. Landscape must have background. So the life complete.

I never fully appreciated goldenrod, and blue aster, and black alder until, standing one day on the corner of Broad and Wall, I suddenly felt that something vital was missing. The sad cadence of the whip-poor-will had often got on my nerves as I tossed sleepless in the awful silence of a country night. Then, one lonely evening on Fifth Avenue, near Forty-second, it came over me with all the force of deep conviction that the song of a wild bird was as much an essential of human advancement as the lordly limousine and the Ritz. And the Grand Central was just around the corner.

And I longed, and resolved, and pretty soon was planning to get away home again. I knew the com-

plexities of life would straighten out along the steel lines leading to the forests, the fields and the lakes. Each of these civilizations, the natural and the artificial, depends one upon the other. Each has its broadening influence, but not completely without the power of happy contrast.

This is how we came finally to know and love all the major and minor revelations of natural life. Education in the fundamentals requires at least a brief experience of urban horror. I do not mean the dodging of automobiles alone. This is to be taken in combination. A farmer will never know his farm, root, branch, soil and silo, if he never sees anything else. The briefest glimpse of the Singer building, dinner with Louis Sherry, and he will go back to the hillside and raise better potatoes and more hogs. No man so quickly and easily drifts into the inefficiency of monotony as the countryman who never gets out of the country. Franconia Notch is all the grander after the Grand Canyon of Broad and Nassau. Nothing more hopeless than the provincialism of the man who views the hills and the lakes from his own back door and never seeks another angle. But why go on preaching the obvious?

I wonder, too, if we—up here—are not, after all, narrow and provincial in protesting so much. What is a geographical line, anyway? Only an accident that we are on one side or the other. And being this side and seeing things as they are, we set up the signboards: This way to the Beauties of Nature!

When North Winds Blow

This Way to the Grandest Lake Country in the East! This Road to Health and Happiness! And then again—why not? If we help ourselves we also help our friends. Again the story of lighting a thousand other candles and having our own candlelight just the same. This, my one and only apology for putting up the arrows along the broad highway to pleasure.

There are sixteen hundred inland bodies of water within the confines of the State of Maine that can be dignified by the name of lake. I have heard this so often, read it so much, said it and written it so many times myself that I have come to really believe it. I have actually seen enough hundreds of them, Mousam to Madawaska, Parmachenee way across to Meddybemps, to be convinced that the dry statistics of official reports are understatements.

"Lake, n. A considerable inland body of standing water." "Pond, n. A small body of still water," says the dictionary. Meaning, therefore, by lake, fresh water areas from a hundred acres up to a hundred and seventeen square miles, the extent of Moosehead. These are the limits set by Dr. William Kendall in notes on Maine waters made for the federal government. And what is good enough for him is good enough for us. He places the number at sixteen hundred after studying all the authorized maps and surveys, and then goes on to say that there are doubtless many more above the minimum size

not shown in the charting. Including the ponds there are thousands. In 1914 the Maine Water Storage Commission published a gazetteer of the rivers and lakes of the State. This gives an official list of 2281 "lakes" and "ponds."

Just for instance, I am way down here in a coast town this crisp winter morning and in twenty minutes can walk to half a dozen and find good skating. And this is a salt water fishing village far from the lake country. Hardly a town, generally speaking, Kittery to Fort Kent, where you cannot throw a stone into a pool from the village streets. Maine is way up among the states of the Union in the matter of fresh water area wholly within state limits. Eliminating the surface of the Great Lakes from consideration, it is probably at the top. Look the maps over and see for yourself.

The hip-roof of the State is in the northern part of the Moosehead region, where three rivers, the Kennebec, Penobscot and St. John have their extreme sources. A ridge runs off southwest to the Rangeleys where the Androscoggin has its source. All four of these great rivers of industry and commerce rise within seventy-five miles of each other in Northwestern Maine at elevations from 1,000 to 1,500 feet, and three of them empty into the Atlantic within state limits and an air-line distance of seventy miles. The highland lake country of Maine, the paradise of true sportsmen and affording some of the most picturesque scenery to be found in East-

ern America, is the wide dividing line of the great water sheds of the River St. Lawrence and the Gulf of Maine.

A secondary divide running east and west separates the Penobscot from the St. John and Allegash basins. Its northern slope, which includes the whole of the Fish River Lake country, inclines gently to the north and east. Its waters find their way through the Province of New Brunswick to the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Bay of Fundy.

The southern incline is more abrupt and drains 22,000 square miles of Maine territory into the Atlantic. The state coast line, as the gull flies, is 250 miles in length. Following the bays and inlets, into which flow the waters of the Sebago, Rangeley, Belgrade, Moosehead and Grand Lake chains, bays and inlets that may be accurately described as navigable, the distance is ten times that figure. The frayed coast line of the State of Maine is world famous. More of this anon.

Thousands of small rivers, streams and brooks radiate from these main channels, draining thousands of lakes and ponds over a surface beautifully grooved by the glaciers of thousands of years ago.

I repeat these bits of physical geography because we who live here are apt to forget their remarkable import, and that you who sojourn may better appreciate what Maine has to offer.

There are no natural divisions of the lake systems. They run one into the other in wild promis-

MOUNT KATAHDIN ACROSS DAICEY POND

Third, the Belgrade chain, beginning on the west and south with the Monmouth and Winthrop ponds, where Bill Carrigan used to recuperate his World Series ball players, running north to the Wild Goose Club on Great Moose and east to Unity, Plymouth and Newport, and including, as its grand centrepiece, the Belgrade lakes and Cobbosseecontee, where the fisherman casts his fly for big bass—and hooks them.

Fourth, the great Moosehead region, of vast extent, containing tremendous lake areas, the highest mountain in Maine, the grandest scenery and, please note, all the unpronounceable names in the North American Indian vocabulary—the wildest, most picturesque and altogether the most interesting lake country to be found in all these eastern states. Beginning with Moxie in the upper Kennebec valley and running north to the headwaters of the Allegash and the forests that slope to the St. John and the St. Lawrence, and including, on the south and east, Sebec, Schoodic, Seboois, Pemadumcook and Millinocket. And in the centre Moosehead—forty miles nearly, from Greenville to Seboomook—and Chesuncook, and Chamberlain, and Churchill, and hundreds—yes, thousands—of smaller lakes and ponds, each with its own special physical feature, each with its individual history. A grand region of wild beauty and romance.

I have a few superlatives left and will apply them, if you please, to—Fifth, in the grouping—the Fish

Road Fever

River Lake Country, farthest north of the inland waters of the State, not so well known to sportsmen and traveler, and with almost all its territory in primeval wilderness. From Little Machias and Portage, where I fished one summer with Major Clark under the guidance of one of William Widgery Thomas's fine old Swedish families, to Madawaska and St. David, where you can start a motor trip with Put Stevens down the St. John Valley to Van Buren over a frontier road that affords some of the grandest scenery of the northeast. This whole lovely region is Saint Francis Cram's own particular, special, individual stamping and camping ground, and if you don't believe it, fill your duffel bag and start with him along the trail.

Sixth, the Grand Lake group, covering all the territory from the Penobsot valley to the New Brunswick line and including all the fresh waters of Southeastern Maine, not to mention the famous swift water salmon fishing of Grand Lake stream. From Green Lake in Hancock County to Musquash and Baskadegan and hundreds of lakes and ponds in upper Washington, even up to Fort Fairfield in Aroostook. And not only do you find here wonderful fishing in spring and summer but it is a paradise in fall for the hunter of big and little game.

All jewels of the first water, and in settings fashioned and executed by nature in artistic and lavish mood. Do you wonder, then, that we far northeast-

unoccupied summer cottage, on the shore of a miniature lake just off the main road to the mountains, over toward Chocorua. What an hour! It was a sort of play lake, like the pond in the Public Garden, and I contrasted it with the width and wildness of the Arctic where the great explorer in days and nights more youthful had fought, and suffered, and escaped. I wrote a little note of thanks for the unconscious hospitality on the fly-leaf of a book I was reading, and tucked it under the door. I wonder if he ever got it.

My best days, of course, were the walking days, loitering lazily along from village to village, house to house, getting something new every hour from the endless storehouse of nature, birds, flowers, stones, the run of many brooks, crude amateur though I was. And, not the least important, ever and anon a new human viewpoint. The country women were especially impressive.

After all, it seemed to me as I trudged along from farm to farm, woman's problem is very simple. Give to the man, of a morning, a substantial, co-ordinated and otherwise well-served breakfast, start the brute on the new day with a full stomach, domestically tamed and spiritually attuned to the elevated task of digging in the dirt—for that matter any sphere of human endeavor—and she can settle the destiny of empires.

Most crises of life come with the bananas and cornflakes. I once tossed to the mongrel cur of a

slouchy farm-wife a bit of cold chicken from my noonday lunch. She beamed on me with all the graces of a princess. If the way to a woman's heart is through her pet dog's stomach, it ought to be easy for her to realize that gastronomy plays some part in man's salvation.

Yesterday morning, I had observed, my hostess served to her lord and master, in from the milking, a greasy breakfast, on a greasy table partially covered with a greasy, drab-colored oilcloth, fried pork, fried potatoes, cold bread and doughnuts four days old. The coffee, you can imagine, fitted the general crime. Her lord and master went out into the farmyard and in the brief period of fifteen minutes threw rocks at the hens, kicked his horse and quarreled with a neighbor who had come to return a borrowed harrow. I supported him in all these activities with fervid sympathy. I sat with him at breakfast.

This morning a clean-ginghamed, sweet-tempered little thing, rather weak intellectually but efficient in simple affairs, set before the king a well-cooked, neatly-served and abundant meal of which even I could not complain, and I pride myself on a calm, well-balanced judgment of breakfasts. The king went out into the barnyard and set his face to the rising sun and his hand to the day's work with serenity and fortitude. He guessed, too, he'd get the planting done in time for a little fishing before dinner. Liked trout, and his wife knew just how to cook 'em. And he sent me on my way rejoicing,

and actually laughing at an age-old joke about the weather.

A farmer is known by his garden and his woodpile. A farmer's wife is known by the barnyard atmosphere immediately following the morning meal. Ah, if women only knew! What crude, plain, elementary things are we! Swayed this way and that, now to dejection and failure, now to efficient endeavor, even to great achievement, even to the fulfillment of man's high estate, by breakfast-food. Feed the brute—especially at breakfast.

CHAPTER III

Tidewater to Kezar

COMING in from the west—as you probably are —from the soft-coal smoke, from the clang, clamor, congestion and confusion of the great centres of population and money-making, and using the charming city of Portland as your portal to the great out-of-doors—as you should—here is the Maine lake country at once. For Sebago is less than twenty miles away, and Sebago is the beginning, centre and name of our grand group No. 1, which extends from the tidewater of Casco Bay to the foothills of the Presidential range, from Kate Douglas Wiggin's own particular Saco valley clean over to Pennesseewassee in Norway, where the Indians seemed to be long on names and short on alphabetical variety.

This country, to be sure, includes the most populous counties in the State. Its beauties are easily and quickly accessible. At the same time it has marvelous variety of scenery and its range runs from the placid small ponds of the village to the roar of Hiram falls and wild mountain and forest landscape.

Portland is just as much a part of this Maine show as Cupsuptic, or Poland Spring, or Belgrade bass, or Grand Lake Stream, or Bar Harbor. Not only is it the gateway to almost every summer and winter resort in the State but to my mind it is the

most delightful all-the-year-round residence city in the country.

"To YOUR mind," said Walter Hale to me in derision, "why, you poor, simple provincial, you live here."

"To be sure. How otherwise could I make the statement?"

Walter Hale, actor, artist, traveler, writer—he came here one summer on a motor tour of New England seacoast cities, magazine and book. He was doing the pictures, his talented wife the text. They sought me out as guide and friend, and found something of a philosopher as well in the matter of home towns.

"Of course," they said, still deriding, "you've lived everywhere else, and earned the right of comparison?"

"You come up here—you metropolitans—from New London, Newport, Boston, Gloucester, Marblehead, Newburyport, Portsmouth, and expect to find a frontier trading post, a sort of maritime exchange between wild Indians and civilization. And you find, instead, a handsome city, neither too large nor too small, unconcerned about the price of corn, tobacco or fox-skins, unemotional, refined. Twenty minutes to the open country, no less to the open sea. And you're disappointed, and grumpy."

And we cranked up and drove all about. Lunched on the Eastern Promenade, smoked on the Western, bought editions of Thomas Mosher. They laughed

a good deal at me and my enthusiasm, but went away thoroughly delighted with the city. His drawing, I remember, was a bit of architecture characteristic of Old and New England, her writing full of gentle appreciation and praise.

There is beauty, quiet dignity, a certain solidity about Portland that gives excellent preparation for substantial, worth-while pleasures to come, and if I were taking an out-door holiday in Maine, whatever the season of the year, I should plan at least a brief stay here both at the beginning and end.

Down in front of the South Station, Boston, one frigid, east-wind afternoon, I found an old joke in new dress. A rather good-looking, gorgeously gowned Jewess, ample and metropolitan, bejeweled and expensively hand-bagged, was raising her hands in thanksgiving and supplication to the cold, drab building. I stopped, of course, and stared.

"My God, man!" she cried, clutching my arm. "Why do you wonder? It's the way to New York."

Conversely, all roads leading to Portland are good roads, those going out all bad. But if you must go, alas, the old tow-path up through Stroudwater and on to Sebago has most in compensation. John Emery, gentle soul and lover of nature, used to anathematize the big lake; called it an uninteresting, disappointing body of water, and for no reason in the world except that it brought to abrupt conclusion his tow-path walk, and on the picturesque old tow-path he spent many a happy hour. Time and

rude, latter-day vandalism have obliterated many of its features, and suggestion is faint, but there is still much to interest, something of romance and a forceful bringing back of the crude and leisurely commerce of long ago. It is well worth looking up—and down.

How many of us remember that on the gently sloping shores of Sebago Lake, in the little town of Raymond and at the formative period of life, lived for a series of years no less than Nathaniel Hawthorne? That he himself hath said it—it was the happiest period of his career, it helped to mould his character, he lived in perfect freedom like a bird of the air?

Strange coincidence is this! I paused in my wanderings this morning, up the tow-path, up the lake, and picked up James T. Fields's "Yesterdays with Authors," a book of the seventies, wherein this bookish raconteur writes the most delightful and intensely interesting personal reminiscences of great men of letters that can be found in American literature. Thackeray, Dickens, Wordsworth, Miss Mitford, Barry Cornwall and—the only American—Hawthorne. Intimate contact stories of historic literary personages—just the things you wanted to know,—Thackeray's dear old clubs, what Dickens said and did and wore, the American oyster in English literature, personal incidents at dinners at the Tremont House, late suppers at Parker's—biogra-

phy in its most charming form. What friendships, those of Fields! By impulse I turned first to Hawthorne, by accident to this very page:

"The same day, as the sunset deepened and we sat together, Hawthorne began to talk in an autobiographical vein, and gave us the story of his early life, of which I have already written somewhat. He said at an early age he accompanied his mother and sister to the township in Maine, which his grandfather had purchased. That, he continued, was the happiest period of his life, and it lasted through several years, when he was sent to school in Salem. 'I lived in Maine,' he said, 'like a bird of the air, so perfect was the freedom I enjoyed. But it was there I first got my cursed habits of solitude.' During the moonlight nights of winter he would skate until midnight all alone upon Sebago Lake, with the deep shadows of the icy hills on either hand. When he found himself far away from his home and weary with the exertion of skating, he would sometimes take refuge in a log cabin, where half a tree would be burning on the broad hearth. He would sit in the ample chimney and look at the stars through the great aperture through which the flames went roaring up. 'Ah,' he said, 'how well I recall the summer days also, when, with my gun, I roamed at will through the woods of Maine. How sad middle life looks to people of erratic temperaments. Everything is beautiful in youth, for all things are allowed to it then!"

"Often have I, when passing through that town, turned aside to study the features of that landscape, and to reflect upon the influence which his surroundings had upon the development of this author's genius. A few rods to the north runs a little mill-stream, its sloping bank once covered with grass, now so worn and washed by the rains as to show but little except yellow sand. Less than half a mile to the west, this stream empties into an arm of Sebago Lake. Doubtless, at the time the house was built, the forest was so much cut away in that direction as to bring into view the waters of the lake, for a mill was built upon the brook about half-way down the valley, and it is reasonable to suppose that a clearing was made from the mill to the landing upon the shore of the pond; but the pines have so far regained their old dominion as completely to shut out the whole prospect in that direction. Indeed, the site affords but a limited survey, except to the northwest.

"Across a narrow valley in that direction lie open fields and dark, pine-covered slopes. Beyond these rise long ranges of forest-crowned hills, while in the far distance every hue of rock and tree, of field and grove, melts into the soft blue of Mount Washington. The spot must ever have had the utter loneliness of the pine forests upon the borders of our northern lakes. The deep silence and dark shadows of the old woods must have filled the imagination of

a youth possessing Hawthorne's sensibility with images which later years could not dispel.

"To this place came the widowed mother of Hawthorne in company with her brother, an original proprietor and one of the early settlers of the town of Raymond. This house was built for her, and here she lived with her son for several years in the most complete seclusion. Perhaps she strove to conceal here a grief which she could not forget. In what way, and to what extent, the surroundings of his boyhood operated in moulding the character and developing the genius of that gifted author, I leave to the reader to determine. I have tried simply to draw a faithful picture of his early home."

What a find—for a lazy man. I must read more. But there is another reason for these quotations. Though the observations were made and written full half a century ago, and by men who never imagined what was coming to their successors in a single generation, they yet describe conditions much as they exist today in all this region. I do not mean conditions of dilapidation and loneliness that characterized even then Hawthorne's boyhood home and surroundings. Far from it. But I do mean conditions of quietness and ease, slow living and high thinking, the physical atmosphere that makes for patience and generosity, godliness and calm judgment, the very gentility of human existence.

Serenity like this pervades the whole valley from the northern shores of Sebago and the Songo way

up to North Lovell on the Upper Kezar, where the mountains loom and a wilder outlook turns the mind to braver things. A valley of large lakes and small lakes, two hundred streams and brooks, the beginnings of a river of much history written and unwritten, forests of great vigor, peaceful fields—it lends to good living and good literature, was the early inspiration of America's greatest writer of romance, the home and happy hunting grounds of America's greatest poet and—lest we forget—the birthplace and early home of America's greatest humorist of his time.

The delight of these small towns! The calm and peace, the neighborliness, the leisurely tilling of the soil, the delayed gathering of the crops, all the rural activities and inactivities! Who would change Naples, or Bridgton, or Harrison, the Waterfords, the Lovells, or Fryeburg—the Fryeburg of Webster, of Howells? Ah, but someone will. Of course. And in the much-worn name of progress. But not in our day, praise be! Not in our day, I hope, shall we ever meander these village streets and not feel the presence of a yoke of oxen or a canal boat.

All up and down this whole country the White Mountain range is the dominating feature of the scenery. Beginning even in lower Sebago Mount Washington is on guard and all is well. You will get glimpses of it from every considerable body of water in the whole valley, and from the very waters

of the upper lakes the entire Presidential range, in certain conditions of atmosphere, seems to rise in all its grandeur and majesty. The lesser and nearer mountains are always in view. From Sebago and Long Lake—Long Lake, no less, mind you, than the "Loch Long" of Longfellow—Mount Pleasant is first seen in the foreground, then the Chocorua group, then, oftentimes, the peak of grim old Kearsarge itself.

"Loch Long," with its American Bay of Naples, is a "mile-wide ribbon of deep blue waters," sweeping in graceful curves quite ten miles up into the hills of Harrison. There is no more beautiful inland water scenery in New England. Fine groves of alternating hard and soft woods, broken frequently by fields of hay and grain, slope gradually to the water's edge. Old-fashioned farm houses, some of them of the red brick of our grandfathers, dot the landscape, while the roads along the ridges on either side make even gasolene a pleasure.

And who wouldn't find it easy and delightful to farm the farms of Bridgton Highlands. For many summers years ago Barnabee brought his opera singers to these waters for rest and recuperation and all the other joys of out-door life. How they made the woodlands ring! I can hear even now, echoing up and down the lake, the grand bass of 'Gene Cowles in his "Will Scarlet" songs. I can see Friar Frothingham stirring a pot of white perch

chowder. A region of wonderful variety is this, and of wonderful beauty.

Perchance, some fine evening in June, at the sunset hour, you find yourself sitting on the shore near Naples bridge looking up the length of Long Lake. A clean, young summer north wind is blowing. Other and gentler forces of Nature conspire to please the sense of sight. You have a view of blue water and blue mountain, of hill and valley, of forest and field, to be a life-time remembered. And if you—you who are worn and weary with city toil—do not say that all this is charming, beautiful, stirring to the milder emotions, serene and restful—if you do not find it, as Hardy finds his Wessex, a place where seeing is meditation and meditation peace, you're no friend of mine.

A region, too, of many boys' and girls' summer camps, ideal for this kind of education and entertainment. Moose Pond, midway between Bridgton and Fryeburg and banked by the picturesque hills of both towns, was the scene of the beginnings in Maine. I like to think of Mr. Cobb, a pioneer in this work, and his hundreds of boys and girls, bare-headed and bare-legged, who go back every fall to the schools of town with brown skins, strong bodies, and entirely new viewpoints of life. And I like to think of crisp winter days and moonlight nights at his Denmark Inn, of the big pillars, where big logs burned on the hearth, where the living was good and

all other forms of hospitality old-fashioned and generous.

Let me mention, before we proceed north to Sunday Cove and other parts of the Rangeleys, another chain of lakes of the Sebago group that add greatly to the scenery of western Maine, much pleasure to summer and winter visitors and something to the history of the country. For here, mid scenes of changeless beauty and solid country neighbors, does the statesmanship of Senator Fernald find its inspiration. On the right, if you please, Thompson's Lake, the Upper, Middle and Lower Range ponds of Poland and a score or more of smaller bodies of water from Otisfield and Bolster's Mills down to Sabbathday and over to Lake Auburn. And running in between them all dozens of brooks whose shaded holes, currents and eddies, and old dam-sites and mill-sites furnish some of the best trout-fishing in the State. I have walked, driven, motored, rowed, trolled, brook-trouted, ice-fished, snow-shoed, skated, skied, coasted, horse-raced, golfed, picnicked, auction-bridged, political-stump-speeched and otherwise loafed this part of the Maine lake country for more than thirty years, and never without some thrill of landscape and other form of out-door delight.

To be sure, Poland means spring water, and spring water is Poland. No one who knows New England, who knows American health and pleasure resorts, their origin, history and meaning to the country,

ever thinks of either in any degree of detachment. But it is not to be lightly passed over and forgotten that the waters of these lakes also add to the glories of this institution. They can be seen from every part of the handsome old town, and when, a century and a quarter ago, Wentworth Ricker swung his tavern sign to the breezes on Ricker Hill he had an eye for inland water beauty that seems to have been inherited in each succeeding generation.

Those of us who love this State, who love to loiter in all the seasons amid its scenes of enchantment, who appreciate the past and present and have a healthful, hopeful imagination for the future, will ever forget how Edward P. Ricker, fighting valiantly, tirelessly, disinterestedly, and alone, prevented a piece of legislative vandalism that spelled destruction for much inland natural beauty—and fighting, too, under the banner: "Save the lakes of Maine." It was unselfish inspiration, foresight, state pride and loyalty, and a service for which his fellow-citizens and hundreds of thousands of visitors will be under everlasting obligation. The result was—we can all see now so well—that not only did we save the lakes of Maine, but we added to them.

I sat one frosty fall night by the open fire of Ned Hastings's duck-shooting camp on Lower Kezar, reading the last book of John Burroughs. Ned was oiling his gun, Gran' Austin playing Canfield. By happy chance I came just then on a most interesting

page whereon the naturalist described, with the calm enthusiasm that always, it seemed to me, characterized his out-door writings, the flight of a flock of wild swans, which he saw one day from Woodchuck Lodge. He spoke of it, I remember, as a rare sight, and while not unprecedented with him, was most unusual and unexpected, in fact an event in his long life of observation. The description was, of course, vivid and entertaining, and I interrupted the important occupations of my companions to read it aloud.

"A most remarkable coincidence," said Ned. "Not ten minutes ago I was thinking of wild swans, and what happened to me in this very camp. Within the space of three years I have seen two good-sized flocks out in the cove here, and a pair of them now decorate the State House at Augusta as proof of my story. Have to have the visible evidence up in this country."

And he went on to tell his story, interesting to anyone, exciting to a bird lover.

At bacon-time one morning in November, while he was frying, and bringing the coffee to boil, one of the town boys who was his shooting companion on this particular black duck expedition, came rushing in from outside in tremendous agitation.

"Say, get your gun! Come quick! Flock of the biggest geese you ever saw right up in the head of the cove among the tolers. All white."

Running out, gun in hand, he worked cautiously up to the blind, and looking out between the dead leaves and twigs beheld, as he put it, the grandest sight he'd ever seen in birdland. Not geese. Much too large, too white, necks too long. He had never seen a wild swan, but his wild life instinct told him what they were. Both counted. Eleven. And a handsome sight it was. Swimming about looking for food but otherwise apparently unconcerned. Well, sir, those big birds stayed right in that little cove six days and nights, it being rather a warm week for November. And then, before the camp was awake one morning, the wind coming in strong from the north-west, with a touch of winter in the air, away they went off to the southland. That is, nine of them. For Ned had taken two for purpose of official display and personal verification. There is a Maine law against shooting swan, so at the end of the third day of the visitation he walked into Fryeburg, called by telephone the fish and game department at Augusta, and obtained the necessary permission. This, of course, was enough, for who of Oxford County is not a sure shot? The flock scattered at the shooting, but strange to relate, the remaining nine all settled down again after a time at the same place. The instinct for food seemed to be stronger than the sense of safety, and the head of that little cove apparently had something special in the line of wild swan delicacies. The two specimens, handsomely mounted, can be seen at the State

House; seventy-six inches tip to tip. The next fall but one a flock of eight came to the same spot, perhaps the same birds, and were seen by the same observer, but they remained only a single night.

I was glad this happened to Ned; glad that he shared with the other great naturalist this rare opportunity. And more than glad to hear him tell the story. And should you happen to be one of the few American sportsmen who need presentation, permit me! Ned Hastings, sir; Fryeburg; who does all the lawyering for all the people in all the country roundabout, who keeps his neighbors out of court and the whole town peaceful, friend and encourager of the fisherman and the gunner, who knows all the places and keeps nothing back; squire by profession, square by instinct; and who always puts a basket of fresh-cut asparagus in the car when you are on the way up to Cold Stream after trout.

The upper part of the Sebago region includes within its limits tributaries both of the Androscoggin and Saco rivers, and marks the division between these two great valleys. I am not sure that you who are here on fishing bent, or sight-seeing, certainly not for any purpose of scientific research, care to be burdened with details of topography, but there are certain physical features of general interest which you ought to know and brief consideration of them will neither delay you nor detract from the pleasures of your visit.

Tidewater to Kezar

The streams emptying into the Androscoggin from the upper Sebago valley are few in number and not of great importance, but Alder brook in Bethel, picturesque and by its name carrying pleasant suggestion of brook trout to the many guests of that beautiful town, and Wild River, rising across the line in New Hampshire and sweeping into the big river at Gilead, must be mentioned. Further south in what we have designated as the Sebago country there are other slopes to the Androscoggin, the Little Androscoggin which joins at Auburn being the most important stream.

Right up in Crawford Notch, the narrow part, where in the old days of low-powered motors, we always wondered if we could make the rise, more than fifteen hundred feet above tide-water, a higher elevation than the source of any of the other great rivers of Maine, the Saco begins its grand tumble to the sea. A river of infinite variety, of interesting history, of romance, of literature, of homely and rugged beauty and beauty as calm and gentle and soft as a summer sunset, and—years ago—a river of many salmon. They have been speared by Indian and hooked by white man forty-five miles up from Saco bay, at the foot of Hiram falls, where white water drops in five successive plunges full eighty feet.

The Saco drains eight hundred square miles of territory in Western Maine and six hundred of the high mountain district of Eastern New Hampshire.

When North Winds Blow

Altho shortest of the great power rivers of the State a hundred and nine lakes and ponds pay tribute, among them the large ponds of Lovell, Fryeburg, Bridgton and Denmark of this Sebago country. Its natural flow is most constant of all and serious effect from freshet or drought is rare. It is also one of the deepest of Maine rivers. Not a ford from Fryeburg to the sea. And landscape, and waterscape, all up and down its ragged shores! Well, if you incline to a grand picnic in glorious scenery, get Joe Cassidy to drive you up to the high bank diagonally opposite the falls of Hiram, under the big pine,—you'll quickly find it—with a commodious and well-filled hamper and, just for sentiment's sake, in memory of days gone by—and some nights—a bottle opener.

The main outlet of the Sebago group is the Presumpscot River which issues from the big lake at its southeastern point and, after turning many wheels of industry, empties into Casco Bay. It drains a territory of five hundred and twenty square miles. Into Sebago Lake itself flow the waters of twenty-nine ponds. Official surveys show the depth of the main body as four hundred and ten feet. But Dr. Kendall reports that "Mr. Frank Meserve of Songo Lock affirms that he has paid out eight hundred feet of line off Ward's Point in Casco, and found no bottom." Little Sebago, just east, and little sung in song and story, is still a considerable lake, running, a ribbon like Long Lake, eight miles through the

towns of Windham and Gray. Years ago we used to catch a small and lively salmon there called the "jumper," a lowly and undignified name for even the humble representative of a family so lordly.

In a far-off, top-floor corner of the Boston Public Library one winter I took an abbreviated reading course in landscape architecture. It was a sort of tabloid condensation, at best a negative acquisition, for the primaries—and I got a little beyond—consisted in unlearning a lot of things that had been fundamental in the mid-Rutherford B. Hayes cemeteries of my youth. But two positives stand out, the importance of the early English artists who knew their vistas and could make a lawn look like a dispensation of Providence, and the proper setting for sunsets.

With the latter of these we are now dealing. For we are back again in the upper part of the Sebago country, its extreme northern limit, between Centre and North Lovell, and looking, east to west, across Kezar Lake. And this is the home of sunsets. My book education, sustained one evening by a renowned American artist on the veranda of the Poland Spring House, where the sunset hour is also a bit of reverie, had taught me that a green field sloping to the water's edge, the mirror of a small lake and, beyond, an evergreen wooded ridge for line of horizon—these in succession enhance the beauty

of any known sunset and add to the glories of the heavens.

And here we were one early October sunset, just back from the shore-line of Kezar, after a hard day's ride, with each of the landscape conditions fulfilled and a tumultuous display of color in the clouds that awed us all into complete and eloquent silence. No! Certainly not! No poor pen should ever attempt a skeleton of description. All the genius of all the Turners in all the world could not paint it.

CHAPTER IV

The Lure of Rangeley Trout

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I

UP ON THE Rangeleys one spring I had one of those talkative, reminiscent guides who try to make up for a bad day with the rod by personal anecdote and four-reel local history. He was fat, lazy, easy-going and an inordinate ultimate consumer of Navy plug. He chewed before breakfast and after supper, and all day, oftentimes smoking a black corn-cob pipe the while. His name was Jim Pounds and it fitted. But he knew the lakes and ponds, the streams and brooks of this Rangeley group like a book. He was something of an expert on inland weather and had an unerring instinct for fish. He knew where they were today, where they would be tomorrow. If you couldn't strike them with him they were not to be struck. His genius saved him many hours of boat-pulling in a season, and for the sportsman it compensated for ceaseless and, for the most part, pointless, conversation. He talked while bailing, talked while baiting up, talked while netting, talked while reeling in, talked while cooking. Talked in his sleep. But this overcast, gray day, it seemed to me, he had a real story.

We had skirted Brandy Point and trolled the west shore all the morning, and then struck straight across the lake for the coves and hidden rocks of the

east shore, well to the south of Bald Mountain. Late afternoon found us headed up the lake toward a group of camps not far from where Captain Fred Barker's "Barker" now stands. Luck had been fair and we had no complaints. Among others, a handsomely marked, seven-pound Rangeley lake trout lay in the bottom of the boat. Truth and modesty compel me to relate that Jim both hooked and landed him. Jim was therefore in good spirits and running true to form, true form of course meaning a leisurely, loafing stroke and incessant loquacity.

Crossing the mouth of a small cove a strange thing happened. He stopped rowing. But not that. He stopped talking. He looked up and down the lake and then at the shore. Mused a bit. Then said: "Pretty near here." Then rowed on slowly, still looking up and down and shoreward. Stopped again. Pondered again. Then with the gravity of an ultimatum:

"Yes, sir, this is it! See that shack on shore there? Whitewash on the gable end?"

"Well?"

"Well, sir, this is the spot—the very spot—where the Honorable James Pounds came within the ace of spades of losin' his life and the Democratic party of Franklin County its only voter. All of a shiver every time I see the white end of that shanty. Don't row into this cove any oftener'n I can help. Awful mess I got into—Say, let out more line. Let

'er run! Lot of water here. Don't I know it? Don't I KNOW it?

"Just ten years ago this very spring. Last of May, just before Decoration Day. 'Bout this time. Ice been out only three days. Ed Spinney and I had been guidin' a crowd of Portland fellers up at Charlie Robinson's camp over Saturday and Sunday, and come Monday mornin' they all went out on the early boat and took the cars at Bemis. We had another crowd comin' in Tuesday to stay a week. Some of Hiram Ricker's folks—and Sam Boothby. So we just planned to loaf 'round Monday, patchin' up and doin' odd jobs. Well, sir—Say that's 'nuff. Let 'er hang there—ought to strike something 'fore long. Well, sir—come that Sunday night, it come on to rain great haystacks, northeast and cold—almost snow. Rained all night—hard, drivin'. Come mornin', and a thick, heavy mist settled down on the lake, so you couldn't see more'n a boat length. Worst I ever see. Up against that vapor a Bay of Fundy fog—well, sir, a Bay of Fundy fog would look like a crystal-clear nor'-wester. No exaggeration about it. Rain had turned into a drizzle. Drizzle turned into that mist, and it clung to the top of the water like it was glued. Sort 'er merged into the lake, and you couldn't tell which was which.

"Well, sir, I says to Ed, 'Ed'—we was stayin' that Monday down to Joe Withee's camp. Joe was Henry Whitman's deaf cook. Henry kept him not

because he could cook but because he was deaf. Said the deafer a cook was the worth he was more. Henry had a lot of funny guests. 'Ed,' I says, 'this is a mornin' in a million. They'll bite. I'm goin'.'

"Ed, he ups, too, and we shove off, Ed rowin' and me riggin' up two rods and reelin' out. Ed, he could just die rowin' a boat. Probably will. Takes to it and likes it. So when we go together, he just naturally settles down to the oars, and me into the stern sheets. No argument. Always used to like to go with Ed. Well, sir, we had every kind of temptation on them lines. Archer spinners, live smelts and everything. Anything in the pond hungry that cold mornin', 'twan't our fault. Ed, he kept sayin'—"

"Well, what happened? Down to cases."

"Well, sir, nothin' happened for almost an hour, and then the event of my life transpired—right there—bang, swish, swush—just like that—just like that. You see—say, reel 'er in, reel 'er in. Lemme look at that bait. Funny we don't strike somethin'. Never got skunked off this cove."

Bait readjusted and embalmed, the monotony of trolling and Jim's sing-song voice was resumed. Impatient, I again urged him to come down to concrete facts.

"Well, now, hold on. Who'd this thing happen to? Who's tellin' this story anyway?"

"Apparently no story is being told."

Ignoring this he continued.

"Well, sir, nothin' at all for an hour—not even bottom. And Ed, he says: 'Jim, this is too damned cold for me. Me for the fireside and the Fireside Companion.' Ed, he was always a great reader. So he rows ashore and goes up to Joe's camp. Notice now—it's part of the story—this camp is all of three-quarters of a mile up the pond from this point and this point is sure half a mile from the middle of the cove. Keep these sorter fixed in your mind. Well, sir, I wa'n't a mite satisfied about the fish, and kept sayin' over and over to myself: 'This is a mornin' in a million. Salmon.' So I rows out again into the fog, round the point; two miles; cold as the devil, wet but hopeful. We had a borrered boat, two borrered rods and riggin' and a borrered net. Also keep in mind what I had on."

"Hurry up, hurry up!" It was my last effort.

"Arch Bennett's big sweater, Joe's reefer, the Duke of York's long mackintosh and Herb Clay's hip rubber boots. These over a regular suit of clothes belongin' to various owners, who, I feel quite certain, would be perfectly willin' to have their names suppressed. The winter undershirt and drawers were my own. I always thought that the events of that mornin' was a sort of judgment of the Eternal on borrerin'.

"You will also please remember the atmospheric conditions—as they say. Ed and Joe, they both

said they never see anything like it on these lakes. Thick? Why, that was the one mist in history you couldn't cut with any kind of a knife. Well, sir, I kind of skirted 'long shore for a while, just keepin' the tree-tops in sight. No wind, 'n no sound of any kind to go by. So I knew if I got out of sight of the tall spruces I might get turned round sort of, and be late for Joe's griddle cakes. We was sort of plannin' on a big home dinner that day, all three of us bein' alone. Well, sir, I got over this side of the point, and was chewin' away, and whistlin' and singin' them Spanish war tunes, and tryin' the echoes,—when, bing—swish—swash—swush — out went the line on the right-hand rod clean down to the end of the reel. Wish Perce Ripley was here. He can imitate a fish strikin' and the click of these modern reels, just like a mockin' bird.

"I grabbed the butt of the rod, give her a twitch and see right off he was hooked for fair. Pretty soon—swish and swash again—too bad Perce ain't here—he breaks clean, shakes vicious-like, dives and makes over across the other line. I see right away I wa'n't goin' to have no real chance to reel in that other line. Nothin' less than a nine-pound salmon, sir,—a lacer and a fighter. I got right down to business. 'Course he got all tangled up, and pretty soon overboard went the other rod, riggin', crotched stick and all.

The Lure of Rangeley Trout

"Well, sir, to make a long story short, as I reckoned it, I played that fish all of forty minutes. 'N then got him 'long-side for about the sixth time and he laid out flat-like and tuckered. Says I: 'Mister, you're about all in. The net for you.' 'N I reached round behind me. Couldn't feel it, 'n looked and see it was way up in the bow, stickin' out. I was settin' in the after rowin' seat. No use in tryin' to get a big one like him over the side. Net or no fish. So I rises up, holdin' the rod in my left hand, line taut, and starts to step over the seat and up in the bow.

'Course I'd forgot all about the drizzle, and the mist, and the wet, and smelt slime in the bottom of the boat, 'n stepped over confident-like and unconscious. Who's rowed any more'n I have all these years, Umbagog to Tim pond? Well, sir, this time no swish—just swush. In the sixteenth part of a second, before I knew what was goin' on, I was overboard and under water out there in that lake, tangled up in silk line, leader, hooks, reel, oar, cushion, sweater, reefer, mackintosh, hip rubber boots and nine-pound salmon—clutchin' that steel rod as if it was a cork life preserver. I'll say right now that's the last I ever saw of that salmon. You know what rats do to a sinkin' ship. And the rod and line went with him. He was hooked all right.

"Comin' to the surface, and blowin', and takin' my first observations, there was the boat all of ten foot

away. I clung to the oar, trod water as best I could and somehow worked back to the side of the boat. I wa'n't much of a swimmer, even swimmin'-time in summer. And how I got back with all that riggin' on, and them big boots all the time fillin' with water, was more'n I can tell. So I counted it as a large part of my troubles was over. But 'twas a bad count. They hadn't begun. Catchin' holt of the side light as I could, even then she tipped and I see what was the matter. She was half full of water. You see when my boot slipped on the bottom as I started to reach for the net, and I lost my balance and found I was goin', I sort of kicked clear so as not to get mixed up with the riggin',—rowlocks, oars, lines and things. But my heavy boots hit on the side and she filled up to the seats. Couldn't hang there, of course, so I worked along hand over hand up to the bow and took a holt on each side. Got her on an even keel, and found by treadin' water a little she'd hold up.

"So I hung on, took a breathin' spell and made a few calculations. Looked 'round—all 'round. Not a thing in sight—not even a tree-top. Not a sound. Not a breath of air. Fog thicker'n ever. 'Course I'd got turned round and lost all idea where the shore was. Couldn't swim it anyway, even if I knew. Well, sir, it was up to me to holler, and I started in then and there. Seemed kind of simple for a full-grown man like me—and a fat man—to be yellin'

out the word, 'help,'—and yellin' it out into the nowhere, too. But that was all there was to it. The situation seemed to call for a sinkin' of whatever pride I had, and I hollered, 'Help,' long and loud and all up and down the scale.

"I knew there were no other fools out on the lake that mornin', and I'd got to raise the camp. And the camp, you'll remember, was more than a mile away, round the point, and a whole forest of thick spruces in between. Joe was deaf, and Ed was inside by the fireside readin' the Fireside Companion. Things didn't look very cheerful for me. But I kept hollerin'. I put every kind of a feelin' I could think of into that simple word. And then listened —and listened. Not even an echo came back, and I begun to fear I'd got out from shore further than I thought, playin' that fish.

"Well, sir, I kept it up, seemed to me hours, and nothin' happened. Then I made two or three tries to get into the boat over the bow, keepin' her balanced with hands on each rail. Once I got the pit of my stomach right up in the peaked end of the bow and was holdin' my breath, and balancin' and wigglin' in when the water inside swashed over and away she went again. Every time she did this she took in more and I had to give it up, and take to hollerin' again. Another long spell of this, and listenin'. I was gettin' hoarse, and chilled, and tired, and discouraged.

"But funny things come to my mind just the same. There's Ed, I says to myself, readin' stories by the open fire, and smokin' his pipe, and takin' a nip with Joe now and then, and jokin', and me out here in the water with only the metal plate in the bow of that boat for readin' matter. It was a short story and not very excitin'. All it said was, 'Sanborn, Maker. East Sebago, Maine'. I kept readin' it over and over and repeatin' it out loud. Funny things a man'll do times like that. And then, right in the midst of crazy doin's like that, when I'd begun to resign myself to life and death on the ocean wave, a human voice comes in out of the air: 'Hello-o-o-o!' My God! Ed! Over on the point! At last! Nothing very musical about Ed, but that voice that mornin' sounded a good deal sweeter than anything I'd ever heard on earth, or any singin' I'd ever dreamed of in heaven. I hollers back, hoarse as I could, and puttin' in all the feelin' I could muster:

" 'Overboard, out here. Get a boat. Come quick!' "

" 'Oh, go on, Jim, you're foolin'. Come 'long in. Dinner's ready.' "

"Well, sir, that simple little remark hit so desperate gloomy that it took the guts right out of me. I tried to gurgle back something, but Ed, he said afterwards he never heard it. Then another long wait, and no sound from shore. Kept hollerin', but no answer. There I was, says I, payin' the penalty

of being a practical joker all my life, and a fat practical joker at that. Ed goin' back to the Fireside Companion, thinkin' I was out there trollin' for salmon and tryin' to have a little fun with him and Joe on the side.

"Then the fog kind of thinned out a little. Looked where I thought the shore was. And, what do you know? There, plain as day, was the white gable end of that shanty. Only thing in sight. Not a tree. But it looked to me like a lighthouse in the home harbor and I perked up a bit. 'Course I couldn't swim it, but just knowin' where the shore was, was somethin'. Waitin' again and hearin' nothin', I says, says I, I've got to take one desperate chance. So I kicks off the rubber boots and sheds the mackintosh and drops clean down into the water to see if I really could swim. Nothin' to it. Couldn't last ten feet. Only hope was clingin' to that boat. So I grabs back on the bow again.

"One last desperate effort, I heads her for the beacon and tries to work her toward shore, kickin' with both feet and swimmin' an overhand with one arm. Nothin' to that either. Speed no more'n an inch an hour. Resources all exhausted, as they say, nothing to do but holler and wait.

"We now come to the matter of water temperature, as right here it begins to play an important part in the tragedy. You will remember the ice had been out of this big pond only three days. I don't

know what the glass would have shown—as they say —but my legs was getting numb. Funny thing, I didn't suffer much round the body. And there I was soaked. Been under water twice. Kind of reckoned all them clothes kept the heat of the body in and workin' a little. But right after I kicked off the boots I began to suffer in the legs. Kept workin' 'em all the time, but nothin' doin' in circulation.

"This was the dark just before the dawn. For out of the air again comes a sound, this time the sound of oars crunchin' in rowlocks. Nearer—nearer. I hollered. Ed hollers back. And pretty soon, out of the mist looms the rescuin' boat, Ed and Joe both rowin' for dear life. Ed is no Apollo, as they say, and Joe would never take a first in a beauty show. But them fellers looked good to me. They towed me ashore, boat and all, I run up and down to get back circulation and then we pulled round the point to camp, I at one pair of oars to keep off chills. We piled on the yellow birch and rock maple. I stripped and rubbed down in front of the fire, took about five, big and hot, rolled up in a couple of blankets and slept like the innocent young child which I was not.

"Next mornin' the sun was shinin', the robins and bluebirds was singin', and I hadn't an ache or a pain. They wouldn't believe it. Ed, he figured, makin' all calculations, I'd been in that cold water an hour and twenty minutes. Doctor in that Tuesday party and

they had him try me all over. Sane,—as I usually was—and sound. Ed and me has been good friends a good many years. Worked together on these lakes all of twenty. We've had tiffs, and I know I'm awful aggravatin' at times. But he's white, and I'll never forget that once, when hope was gone and life was dark, he looked like an angel from heaven. What if they'd both been deaf?—Say, mister,—you've got a fish there. Let him have it, let him have it! Careful now, careful!"

I checked up the whole story afterward, beginning to end. And found it true in every detail.

"Say," said Jim, that night, "I forgot to tell you. I had to do an awful lot of free guidin' for the next two years, to pay for all that riggin'. About the only thing that was salvaged out of that boat was one oar and two dead smelts. And somewhere round this lake there's a hump-backed, nine-pound salmon towin' a twenty-dollar rod."

II

The most fervid enemy would never accuse me of uncontrollable predilection for snobbish luxury. If occasion requires, if dire necessity compels, I can without complaint sleep in a bed without a canopy and breakfast on nothing more than fruit, cereal, planked whitefish, griddle cakes and coffee. A million dollars and all that it means in ease and voluptuousness is recognizable but not essential. Life can

be sustained, liberty preserved and some happiness pursued on half that sum. In a pinch any old brown-stone front will do. But if there is one thing I love, and must have, it is the oriental luxury of riding into the wilderness propped up, like a lazy and lustful Turk, in the soft and expensive plush of a parlor car.

To be borne on in Pullman abandonment, preserved figs and cream, past old logging camps, the soaked sawdust piles and other ragged leavings of portable mills, past blow-down and slash, is to live through one of the great moments of life. And then to be brushed, yes-sirred and thank-you-sirred and set down at the porte-cochere of any one of half a dozen comfortable lake hotels is to prolong the moment and allow it to merge with pleasant gradation into the ecstasy of that feeling that comes to every man when he suddenly finds himself in the open and back to nature. The method of transition has added to the charm. Thoughts of yesterday enhance today, and the anticipations of tomorrow find new and freer play.

Thus do we always come to the Rangeleys. One can automobile, to be sure, up through Farmington and Phillips, and there are some good roads over on the other side in the Umbagog and Magalloway country. But if you wish to initiate the holiday with most delightsome contrast take a chair at the North Station and ride in state up through Bemis,

close under Bald Mountain, along the mile-wide strip between Cupsuptic and Rangeley proper, past Oquossoc, home of the pioneer and world-famous angling association, up Kennebago stream, and, if you are going that far, on to Grant's at the north-west end of Kennebago Lake. A short and pleasant day's journey, and before you realize it you are on inland fishing grounds where fishing history began, the centre of angling resorts probably the most famous in Eastern America.

There are superlatives to be applied with the utmost veracity to each of the great lake systems of Maine. The trout superlative has belonged to Rangeley by common and undisputed acceptance now these many years. No one argues it. The Moosehead, the Fish River, the Grand Lake enthusiast has reluctantly admitted it, and when you have said that you have said all. Up here, we live, move and have our being in terms of Rangeley trout. And trolling or casting for Rangeley trout, as Dr. Van Dyke says, pervades all thought and conversation. There is grand scenery, other forms of outdoor life, other interesting quests, but sooner or later you must succumb. Even if you are not an angler, never have been one, have no wish to be, about the second day the surrender is complete. First to fish stories and then to fish. Come to the Rangeleys without a tooth-brush, if you will, but not without a rod.

When North Winds Blow

There are salmon here, and they are increasing each year—many salmon. And like those for which Sebago is famous they are all fighters. Many good, loyal old Rangeley fishermen, like Jim Pounds for instance, delight to hook them, and play them and go overboard after them. In fact, the recorded fish of the Rangeley basin include nineteen species, thirteen of which are native, but only a limited number are game fish.

The trout family of the neighborhood is divided and subdivided by the scientist into a fineness almost hopeless to the layman. There are blueblack trout, white trout, cedar tree trout, and others with long Latin names. But what is known to the common man as the regular Rangeley Lake trout is the regular business up here. And this is the old-fashioned, native, common brook trout of the State of Maine, grown up, grown strong and grown handsome. Many anglers of wide range and experience say that it rivals the Rainbow of the Far West. It certainly is good sport and good eating.

Be it understood that I am speaking of the Rangeley system as a whole and including the hundreds of small lakes and ponds to the north which make up an important part of this game-fish territory. An increasingly important part, I should say, for each new season finds a larger number of anglers tramping and canoeing further into the by-ways and seeking new waters. Otherwise, that is if I were confin-

ing these fishing comments to the main group, I should run counter to the findings of no less than the federal government. Official report finds the salmon increasing and trout diminishing in the big lakes. A bulletin of the bureau of fisheries for the year 1918 reports salmon as preponderating. But there are other waters where the trout specialist can find his sport for many years to come and for many years to come the old-time glory of the Rangeley system as the grandest of trout waters will be maintained.

The typical Rangeley trout are found in all the waters of the region, large and small, and in quantity production, the expression used by a manufacturing friend who has just been in to inquire conditions at Round Mountain Pond. Of course I tried to impress on him that quantity production was not a sporting term, but it was difficult. Fish, by George —that was what he was after—fish, good and plenty, especially plenty!

Strange, how long it takes for some of our otherwise reasonable city fishermen, busy, hustling, nervous men, to learn that numbers do not constitute the main objective. Their idea of a vacation seems to be to get in and get out and back to the grindstone with a good story, not of good sport, but of catchin' 'em by the hundreds—yes, sir, actually hundreds. One of our fishing statesmen from Washington came in one season and in half a day landed

two hundred and fifty trout, from half a pound to two ounces in size, in one of the lower coves of Kennebago. Of course he put back all but the legal number. However, in this case it seemed worth while, for he said to me the next day down at Haines Landing: "Great country up here, my boy, great country! But it's the first place I ever saw where the gentle art of angling becomes primarily an exercise for the hardened athlete." This was no record.

Some of the smaller ponds, north and north-east of Kennebago, where the Rangeley region begins its slope toward the upper Kennebec valley, are teeming with small trout. There are virgin waters there which the older guides even have never fished. But let me repeat, quantity production is not a matter of boasting.

III

The Rangeley chain proper, the center in importance and topography of this group No. 2, extending west to east, is almost fifty miles long and covers about seventy-seven miles square of interesting and picturesque territory. I am using that word picturesque quite often, I find—overworking it, perhaps. "Forming, or fitted to form or suggest, a picture possessing quaint, rugged or homely charm. Syn. see pictorial." Oftentimes up here in the Maine country one really can't help it. No other word.

So why not? Especially here in the Rangeley country. Syn., see piscatorial.

This main group consists of six bodies of water of considerable size, by original Indian name, Umbago, Welokenebacook, Molechunkamunk, Mooselucmeguntic, Cupsuptic and Oquossoc. In modern nomenclature, Welokenebacook and Molechunkamunk are Lower and Upper Richardson and Oquossoc is Rangeley proper. The last named lake is 1511 feet above sea level, the highest elevation of any of the lake sources of Maine's great power rivers. Mooselucmeguntic is the largest of the group, nine miles from inlet to outlet and five miles in greatest width. As you will see by the map it is irregular in shape and spreads out to all points of the compass in long, narrow arms. Cupsuptic is really an arm of this larger body.

The building of the Upper and Middle dams, changing the shore lines, took away from Cupsuptic the dignity of standing alone, though its name remains. Compensation for this advance of industry lies in the well-known fact that at the foot of these dams there is at certain seasons excellent swift water fishing, the Middle being famous among fishermen the country over and the subject of much eloquent fishing literature.

Welokenebacook, Molechunkamunk, Mooselucmeguntic! I must spell out these names again. Roll them over on the tongue. And then think of poor

Tim pond and Jim pond struggling through life with only three letters. These, too, are in this arbitrary Rangeley grouping, and Chain Lakes, and Moosehorn, and Blackslee, making the northern limits, waters in the wildest of settings and only familiarly known to canoeists and fishermen of the thirty-third degree. And Parmacheenee, over on the western range, a lake of great renown among the elect and giving name to one of the best known and most useful of flies. What angler has not hooked one of his biggest with a Parmacheenee Belle?

All these, with the exception of the smaller ponds of the northeastern group which drain into Dead River and thence into the Kennebec, are the headwaters of the Androscoggin, mile for mile, one of the greatest industrial rivers of the United States.

And speaking of industry. Up in this country there is a big, wealthy, powerful corporation with a soul. More than this, it has sporting instinct. The vast lumber and power operations of the Berlin Mills Company cover thousands of acres of Rangeley territory, forest and lake, river and stream, and it is an important factor in all kinds of life. In Western Maine and Eastern New Hampshire it is known as "the Company." Natives speak of it with loyalty and respect and visiting sportsmen have may pleasant memories of its generosity.

One June, years ago, I well remember, the big fish for some reason seemed to be following the logs

down through the big lakes. The boss left a raft off our camp on Mooselucmeguntic for two days. We had great front yard sport. "That's the Browns," said Elliott Russell, one of the old Rangeley guides. So I speak with personal feeling. They would lend men any day for difficult guiding, there was always open house and generous hospitality at their camps and at other times other forms of helpful encouragement for the true sportsman. Altogether the most useful and delightful combination of big business and pleasure that one can imagine.

Aside from these incidents the general policy of the company in its larger operations has been one of preservation of scenery and game instead of destruction and, contrary to the usual capitalistic belief, it has suffered no financial disadvantage. It is great satisfaction for the out-door man to find his rights thus recognized and protected, and genuine pleasure to record it.

IV

But, though enough, fishing is not all. There is glorious hunting. Yet these twain are not all. The altitude of the Rangeleys is so great—greater even than the headwaters of the mighty Mississippi—and the air so pure, balsamic and exhilarating that thousands find rest and health, and even sport here, quite independent of the quest of fish and game. What calm for the neurotic of a thousand noises!

For here, to lull to slumber, are Minnewawa, which, of course you know, is the soughing of the north wind in pine and spruce; and Mudwaywaushka, which is the short linguistic cut to the lapping-of-the-waves-made-by-the-north-wind-on-the-pebbles-of-the-shore-of-the-lake. And for the nature student his fill.

"Among the bordering woodlands dwell Mahng, the loon, Opechee, the robin, Shuh-shuh-gah, the heron, and Adjideumo, the squirrel, with Mokua, the great bear." Be sure to bring the children. In every camp along the shore lives Iagoo, the great story-teller. At Moonahanis, on a wild and charming little island in Cupsuptic, two pipes north from Bemis, now these many years ago, I heard him tell his tales. And little children blinked at the firelight, and fell asleep. Now they are men and women, good and strong, and all the better and much stronger for the health and romance and wholesomeness of these woods and lakes.

And mountains, too, flung far and wide. Aziscoos, West Kennebago, Snow and Kibby on the west and north; and Saddleback, three-peaked Abraham, Bigelow and Mount Blue on the east. Down in the town of Weld, as you enter the Rangeley country, is Tumbledown Mountain, whereon is one of the natural wonders of Maine, a lake in the clouds, the highest of the State, 2400 feet above the sea. Close to its base a great chasm which forms the entrance to

a cave of many unexplored passages, where only imagination can enter.

In former days, before we Pullmaned up through Rumford Falls right to the shores, the main-travelled route to the Rangeleys was by steam train to Farmington, where we slept, thence by stage up through Strong and Phillips, or, if we were going to the brooks and ponds on the east range, or to old Abraham or Bigelow, through Salem and Kingfield. Now there is a delightful narrow-gauge railroad ride from Farmington to the foot of Rangeley proper and another branching off from Strong way into Crocker Town. The comforts of modern transportation we must have. It has opened up, here in Maine especially, wonderful scenery and far-away open places that would never otherwise be enjoyed by the busy man.

But it has one tendency which old-fashioned folks must overcome, the slighting of the small village gateways to the joys of the wild. If you come to this Rangeley country without having experienced the calm and peace and cool shade of these fine old Franklin county towns you have missed one of the great pleasures of the holiday. Fortunately there is admirable solution. Make plans for what the Concord group of transcendentalists called a wide margin of leisure, and come in one way and go out the other. Don't fail!

But he left an enduring name. To the sportsman, to the lover of nature, to him who takes delight in the robust days and peaceful nights of lake and forest, it means all that can be desired of the healthful wildness of wide-open Maine.

CHAPTER V

The Belgrade Lakes

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The Belgrade Lakes

I

IT WAS here in the Belgrade country—in the North Belgrade country to be specific—that I experienced one of the great thrills of the bird lover. Not the discovery of a rare species, not the solution of some ornithological problem after long scientific research—perhaps the greatest thrill of all. Much simpler, much more prosaic, the mere matter of observation. In Madame Gleason's old orchard, down where it touches the edges of a cedar swamp, I saw my first and only scarlet tanager. No more fishing that day, no more tramping, no bridge. Event enough. All I desired was to confirm it, and tell somebody about it, and keep on talking about it. So I drove down to the Oakland public library while the details were fresh in mind and got out all the books.

There it was, sure enough; complete description, color plate and all; fire-red body, jet-black wings and tail; "seen against a leafy background light seems to radiate from its glowing feathers." Just as I had seen it, against a leafy background, and the glow was one of the well-remembered features. To make confirmation doubly confirmed I went next day to the stuffed-bird collection in Professor Elder's

old building at Colby. That was enough. Identification complete. And I strutted around for a week in a fire-red, jet-black halo with all the importance and enthusiasm of one to whom nature had revealed its best, if not its all. I couldn't understand why people were so calm about it.

"What the hell is a scarlet tanager?" asked Caleb Trask.

I felt hurt, depressed, shocked that there was anyone in the world who did not know that a scarlet tanager was the most important thing in all the history of the universe, fish, flesh or fowl, animal, vegetable or mineral, civilized or uncivilized, dead or alive. And I sought enlightenment and sympathy elsewhere, all up and down the street.

The true bird student, the ornithologist, your scientist, class A, class Aves, will laugh at all this, but he will understand it. He will not have forgotten his own neophytic days when even a scarlet tanager was pleasant excitement. I mention it because the incident teaches a simple but important out-door lesson, the education, broadening influence and real personal pleasure to be found in even the most elementary and amateurish observation of natural life in forest and field. It is just so much in addition to all the other delights, something on the side, velvet I've heard it called in one of the great national pastimes. It costs no effort, you need no extraordinary

sensitiveness of perception. All that is required is to keep your eyes and ears open.

New interests will come with new birds, not new to the experienced observer, but new to you. If you had never seen a robin, or a crow, or a gull, or a swallow, you would get a thrill of original discovery just as the professional naturalist gets it when he finds a tufted titmouse north of New Jersey. I know just enough about birds to be able to distinguish a redstart from a cedar waxwing, to feel compelled to crawl through thickets and scratch my face, and hands, and arms—and legs—to get nearer to the song of a hermit thrush, just enough to know that this is very little.

Sometimes, as I look over the bird books, I feel an ignorance so dense, so abysmal, that I can appreciate and even endure Prescott Warren's annual joke: "Why, man alive, I don't know the birds from the flowers." And yet, I venture, I experience as much genuine pleasure in the quest as Frank Chapman, or Chester Reed, or Thornton Burgess. Not, of course, the pleasure and satisfaction of long experience, trained observation and advanced education, but the emotion, quite as agreeable, of seeing something new and worth while on the wing and in the open.

"The sight of a bird or the sound of its voice is at all times an event of such significance to me, a source of such unfailing pleasure, that when I go

afield with those to whom birds are strangers, I am deeply impressed by the comparative barrenness of their world, for they live in ignorance of the great store of enjoyment which might be theirs for the asking. So I say to you, if you would reap the purest pleasures of youth, manhood and old age, go to the birds and through them be brought within the ennobling influences of nature."

So says Mr. Chapman. It does not mean that you must become expert, that you must always carry wherever you go a field glass, a green bag of scientific books, and plates, and charts. It merely suggests that, when abroad, afield, aforest, or alake, you watch out. You will find a new interest in life and an additional attraction to keep you out-of-doors. All seasons are yours for this gentle enjoyment, but in spring, when these lively neighbors are about in greatest number and variety, and most eloquent in voice, you will find it best to begin. Ah, but you're fishing then, you say. Just the time. Take along the simplest kind of pocket-guide, preferably in colors, and you will enhance the joys of the excursion and lay the foundation for new happiness in the open that you never dreamed.

Thousands of us who have never gone beyond the pocket-guide stage, and probably never will, have been surprised at the ease and quickness with which we have become familiar with the flight, plumage and song of a score or more of common birds and

some that are not common. I am speaking as the veriest amateur, one beginner to another, but as emphatically as I can, trying to impress you with the pleasant healthfulness of the pursuit and all the other possibilities to be found in following it even for only part of the way. If not birds, wild flowers, shrubs, ferns, mosses, trees, stones—bugs even. Anything according to your bent, vocation or avocation, so that you enjoy to the full the gospel of fresh air.

I am reminded to speak of birds more particularly because one gets so much for so little effort, and also because we are down here in the Belgrade group of lakes where birds are an important feature of wild life. Professional observers, men who know and write a great deal about them, have told me that there is no region east of the Mississippi, of such small extent, that contains a variety so large and affords such an excellent opportunity for study. Northern, southern, eastern and western birds meet here in joyous conclave, all the land birds of New England, all the fresh water birds and now and then sea birds. I have seen herring gulls flying over Salmon Lake, particularly salty salt water birds, sixty miles from the salt. There seems to be just the proper proportion of land and water here, while the combination of cultivated and wild food is of a character to attract many diversified elements of this grand aristocracy of the air.

When North Winds Blow

II

Not all of Maine's visitors care for the wild life of the remote lakes and deep woods. Thousands seek change and rest in conditions less primitive, in rural atmosphere but without the extremes of roughing it. Neither gunners, nor fishermen, nor nature students, they still long for the open and will have it. I have letters from many friends and acquaintances and oftentimes from strangers who have learned from former writings that I am cracked on Maine, asking me where to go for the quiet life of small village and farm, simple but comfortable. They wish to get back to nature but not way back. A typical letter is before me now, from a lawyer of Western Pennsylvania:

"Will you be kind enough to tell me where in your state to take my family next summer in order that the children may get the full benefit of out-of-doors and my wife complete change and freedom from household cares. We have two boys and a girl, seven to twelve years. We wish especially the quiet life of a small rural community, near a pond where it will be safe to swim and boat. If possible I would like to have them all see something of New England farm life and know at least part of the conditions under which I lived as a boy. I was born up in your country. We have talked this over all winter and are bound to go to Maine. Now, sir, where in Maine, please? We shall all be grateful."

A very pleasant inquiry, and from a complete stranger. I appreciated at once what he desired, knew there were places like this all over the State and was delighted to answer forthwith.

But pride of authorship is ever short-lived, a fleeting thing; and behold the fall! While I was pleased and puffed up to find that public writings of mine had gone so far as Western Pennsylvania, the letter at the same time reminded me of an experience of quite another character one hot summer's day in another part of the same state. Staying for a time in a Philadelphia hotel and, as usual, falling homesick, and lonesome, and longing for some cool, sequestered spot on Cunner Point, I found myself in conversation, as one will, with the very agreeable young lady of the news-stand. It was all quite natural, of course. I bought all my magazines there, and morning and evening papers. And sometimes, on very lonesome days, I bought editions, as one will. It so happened that among other great news-stand works a book of mine was on sale there. In some mysterious, unaccountable manner the very agreeable young lady found out that I was the author, and, one day as I was buying the three o'clock edition, she said to me:

"Do you see that old lady over there at the desk, talking to the room clerk?"

I did, smiling, and otherwise sociable, and leaning on the counter, as one will.

TYPICAL BOYS CAMP AT BELGRADE

completely satisfying that Belgrade has become the Maine word for this kind of recreation.

Boys' and girls' camps are multiplying here for the very reason suggested in the letter from Pennsylvania. How many families there are in cities of the Middle West and West, and how many more in the Eastern cities, whose fathers and mothers began life in the simple atmosphere of rural New England. How often do those early scenes, often of hardship, more often of pleasure, make up the bedtime stories of the city. The old home—always the old home.

"Each place has its grove of maples, fantastically gnarled and misshapen from the wounds of many sugar seasons; and an apple orchard, commonly past bearing with age, stretches its knotted boughs over a slope near the house. Every year the men-folk plow up an area of garden ground, and plant it with those vegetables, which, to the boarders still feeding in mid-July on last years' potatoes and tough, new-butchered beef, seem so reluctant in ripening; but a furrow is hardly turned elsewhere on the farm. It yields a crop of hay about the end of June, in which the boarders' children tumble, and a favorable season may coax from it a few tons of rowen grass. The old stone walls straggle and fall down even along the roadside; in the privacy of the woodlots and berry pastures they abandon themselves to reckless dilapidation."

How well Mr. Howells knew the old surroundings; how intimate and homely the description, how helpful! I certainly must read more.

And childish imagination runs in riotous circles round the barn. And next summer—yes, next summer, dear—we'll go.

There is no better gratification for this particular human longing than right here on the hillsides, on the ponds, on the small farms, in the small villages of Mr. Blaine's old Kennebec. I know well whereof I speak. For these were the scenes of boyhood, scenes to which I have many times returned, and never without a thrill, never without many memories fraught with days of joyous freedom and the youthful vigor of the open air.

I have said there are few towns in Maine where a pond is not in view from some village street. This is especially true of the Belgrade country. Monmouth, Winthrop, Wayne, Readfield, Fayette, Mt. Vernon, Chesterville, Vienna, Smithfield, Belgrade, Oakland, Sidney, Vassalboro, China—these are all typical small lake towns where the combination of woods, waters and village life is most delightful. And Unity and Newport, both of which have lake systems of their own, considerable in size and beauty, are included in No. 3 of the geographical groups.

If you must, for a base, be near the marts of trade and have your morning paper and evening stock re-

ports, Augusta and Waterville, with comfortable, modern and well-managed hotels, are near at hand. Half an hour's motor drive from either of these Kennebec cities will take you to any one of a score of beautiful lakes, and lakes where beauty is not all. Of course I need not tell you again that Belgrade is the bass fisherman's own.

And when you go to the main lake of the group, Great Pond as we used to call it, where bass fishing and trout fishing are both good, be sure to find Charles Hill. He is the father of the resort industry of all this region and what he does not know about the Belgrade Lakes is not to be known. Many years ago he appreciated the recreation possibilities here, ventured and built on his confidence. He has encouraged and stimulated many others. I wonder if we natives, both in the matter of business and esthetics, fully realize how much we owe to the resort landlords of the earlier period when others were doubtful and hesitant. I am glad to do my little humble all in recognition.

Monmouth, Maranacook and Cobbosseecontee are the important lakes on the southern boundary of the Belgrade country, the last-named but a short drive or trolley ride from Augusta, being the chief recreation resort of the capital city where a great variety of sport includes golf—and good golf—tennis, bass and perch fishing, motor and small boat sailing and canoeing in summer, ice-boating and ice-

fishing in winter, and always the most charming of central Maine scenery.

The enterprise of the Augusta sportsmen has erected a lighthouse at a dangerous spot near the center of the lake, one of the novelties of Maine's inland waters. There are many handsome cottages on Cobbosseecontee, and so entrancing are its shores that dignified judges of the Supreme Court have here been known to cast off their ermine and otherwise unbend. This is marked distinction for the lake, for judges of course never do this anywhere else.

The most eloquent of the guide books call Winthrop the Interlaken of Maine. In the early histories the village and its environs were known as Pond-Town Plantation. Good reason. North, east, south and west, there are ponds or arms of ponds. More than an island, it is surrounded by bodies of water. Maranacook sweeps north, almost from the heart of one village to another, Winthrop to Readfield. It is a handsome lake and one of the beauty spots of the Maine Central Railroad. Nearly fifty years ago—can it be so long—the railroad purchased the land and established on its shores a great picnic-ground where all sorts of organizations, from the Sunday school to the Grand Army, the Cold Water Temple to the Grange, made summer holiday. It was one of the State institutions of the last cen-

tury that stands out most prominently in boyhood memory.

In a way, too, Maranacook became national in its importance. Great boat races were rowed here. I have seen Hanlon, Teemer, Jake Gaudaur, Fred Plaisted, and others of world renown sculling these waters in championship contests. It was great training water for oarsmen and many came here from all over the country when single sculling held a prominent place in American sports. It was a famous place also for great political gatherings at the very time in American history when Maine led all the states in statesmanship. Blaine and Reed, Hale and Frye, Dingley, Boutelle and Milliken have thundered the doctrine on these shores, and surrounding forests carried the echoes. How well I remember those great meetings, when thousands from all over the State, who always took their politics neat, came for great and first-hand truths.

Once, I recall, I heard Mr. Blaine and Colonel Ingersoll on the same platform here, and great crowds swayed up and down the lakeside, awed and inspired. Just to illustrate the broadness and freedom of some religious thought, even in those far-off days, let me record that the leading Baptist clergyman of the county presided at the meeting and introduced the great infidel. Strange bed-fellows of politics. Anathema from the pulpit—but then who could resist endorsing the wit and eloquence of the Colonel when

he condemned the fellows of the opposite party to the one perdition which he admitted.

It often happens that our urban visitors, with kind intentions but more estheticism than regard for local history, insist on changing local names. Crotched Pond, I note, has become Echo Lake. There is no serious objection to this or cases just like it. Crotched is not a very pretty name anyway. Echo is much better, only there are scores of lakes in the State that have been re-named Echo, and many of them with never an echo. But when it comes to changing a name of historical significance, one that means something to old residents, we all ought to enter, at least, gentle protest. I should never wish Lovejoy Pond, for instance, to be anything else. This name means a great deal in Fayette, a small lake town of this region of old-fashioned charm and dignity where local sentiment is strong and entitled to great respect. Or Basin Pond of the same town, where I have spent many days of out-door contentment.

A charming gentlewoman of the old school and of delightful old-fashioned sentiment, who has often been my hostess in these Kennebec rambles, writes me only this week in protest against new and meaningless names. Knowing my interest in the Maine Lake country and hearing that I was "writing articles," she says I cannot be too emphatic on this subject. "And won't you say something about our

Basin Pond," she continues. "You know it well, but to refresh your memory I here mention its principal features." And I take pleasure, in memory of many happy days, in including her own accurate description.

"Its circular form and its abrupt shores suggest its name. Its phenomenal characteristics have always been prolific of interesting comment and scientific questions regarding them have never found satisfactory solution. It is one mile in circumference, having no visible inlet. Its outlet is a shoal, narrow stream, or brook. In some parts it has been sounded to the depth of one hundred feet but without finding bottom. Twenty feet from its shores the water is twenty feet in depth, and at a greater depth fish, twigs, pebbles and rocks can plainly be seen by the naked eye. Its bed, so far as known, is sandy and rocky. Its elevation is fifteen feet higher than that of adjacent ponds. Its waters are remarkably clear and are several degrees colder than those of other ponds in the vicinity. Consequently, the fish, pickerel and other varieties, are of much finer quality, the flesh being whiter and firmer than those taken from contiguous waters. Some years ago land-locked salmon were placed in the pond and are still protected by law. At some seasons of the year eels' nests of immense size are seen clearly at the depth of twenty-five feet. Loons in their attempts to fly out of these waters make the

circuit of the pond four times before reaching the tops of the surrounding trees. The exercise of swimming is greatly enjoyed and far more easily performed than in any similar body of water in this section of the country. Besides these interesting and curious facts, this little lakelet which mirrors the gorgeously attired hills in summer and autumn, presents a scene of quiet beauty unrivalled in New England, and of which no mental picture can be drawn from a pen description."

All over the State there are queer little lakes like this, like Tumbledown, like Chimney Pond at Katahdin, and a freak little pond half way up Mount Bigelow. Not a county without its own particular curiosity, and in some of them there are several. They add something new and unexpected to the scenery, and in many cases great interest for the scientist.

The Belgrade Lakes proper are seven in number and closely grouped among the hills of Belgrade, Oakland, Sidney, Smithfield and Rome. Messalonskee, or Snow Pond as it was known before the days of new names, is a long, narrow and handsome body of water running nine miles from Belgrade to the heart of Oakland. With the exception of Salmon Lake, the smallest of all, the others are still on the maps as ponds. Long, on the southern border, Great, the largest and most important of the group, McGraw, East and North. The shore lines of all are irregular and the scenery, while neither wild nor

even rugged like that of the north country where we are going, is inspiring and has distinction all its own.

A chain of lakes, of which China is the most important and best known, lies in this region only a few miles east of the Kennebec River in the towns of Vassalboro, China and Windsor. Bradley's, on a beautiful little island in China Lake, has been a famous resort for Kennebeckers for three-quarters of a century. In the old days a summer without a picnic there was no summer at all.

Memories run fresh and wild here in this Belgrade lake country, and I have recalled in the tarrying great and varied happiness of childhood, youth and riper years. Nothing stands out more vividly than the life of the country village, and I am moved further to consider and inquire.

CHAPTER VI

Memory Village

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Memory Village

HAS the old-fashioned New England village passed on? The real republic, the simon-pure democracy of all times—is the influence of its steady thinking and slow and sound living lost to the world? I have often wondered.

Having in mind the small, rude, and often crude, village of the sixties and seventies, with its March meeting and Fourth of July oration, its January thaw and August raspberry-picking, its April sap-running and October husking, its cider-making and beech-nutting, its fervid religious revivals and intense political rallies, its quarterly meetings and periodical temperance reforms. When Horace Greeley's comment on the news of the day was quite as important as the news itself, when sectionalism still ran rife and rank and bigotry was a virtue, when even simple pleasures were few and the long, uninterrupted grind of making both ends meet was the only purpose of life. When Comical Brown once a year in Mechanics' Hall was the only general relaxation; or perhaps "Damon and Pythias" by home talent; now and then the Colored Jubilee Singers from Georgia.

Men and women felt in these days, or thought they felt. Quite the same. And expression was vivid. The Civil War was yet very near and real.

It colored all thought and action. The old blue uniform, the little army cap, crutches and hickory cane were familiar sights in the village street. The Copperhead was still sulking. Minds ran in the war groove, and, narrow groove though it was, feeling was large, and strong, and positive. Life was real, life was earnest.

A brief span of time, back to those simple days, and yet what wonders of accomplishment! The man of the seventies had still before him the conquest of the air, under-water navigation, all the marvels of the unseen force except the telegraph, all the terrible contrivances of the world's greatest war, the gasoline engine, and countless other inventions that enter into daily life and make it both simple and complex. And now, it seems, all that remains is communication with the planets and the dead. We wonder at everything but nothing is impossible.

Imagination runs into interesting realms when we picture our fathers and grandfathers planing over to Havana for an afternoon of sport at the track, telephoning, midway, to Uncle Bije who is submarining it somewhere off Dry Tortugas. And after all they might have quickly taken these things for granted. Who knows? No one more easily adapts himself to caviare and cabarets than the man who was raised on corned-beef and baked beans. This may or may not be good psychology. At all events it is history.

Memory Village

I fell in one day at the Ritz, at the luncheon hour, with an old friend and neighbor who lived years ago at the head of the pond. When I last knew him he was milking four cows, taking care of the hens and pigs, bedding down the horse and otherwise helping father around the little farm. He could never go skating with us, I remember, because in off time he chored for a neighboring widow. Now he was sipping sixty-year-old cognac with his coffee while his daughter sat across the table smoking a cigarette in a silver-tipped holder.

"Give me the luxuries, my boy," said he, "and the necessities will take care of themselves."

And wouldn't I like to motor down the Island and see the championship finals? You would have sworn he was born close by on the Avenue. Perhaps Mayfair or Belgravia. I knew he was going to be paged, and of course he was.

The old home town was far away. Yet I could see it all in delightful contrast, and no one more than he could regret its passing. It was a good talking point, and, like Webster's New Hampshire, a good starting point—provided one started.

Primitive old villages are frequent up here in this Maine lake country. Rather more so than in any other New England State. There are some in northern Vermont, a few in New Hampshire. Now and

then one passes through the old atmosphere in Western Massachusetts. But here they may be found almost anywhere, still breathing the life of just after the war days, reminiscent of hoopskirts, parasols and croquet, where only the blacksmith's hammer breaks the afternoon stillness and tinkling cowbells mark the eventime. Gray would have been quite at home.

Only yesterday did I spend hours of delight in just such a little town. Loitering here and there, now in the store, now in the field with the plowman, on woodshed steps, passing time with the hired man, the peddler and the housewife hanging out the clothes—for it was of a windy Monday. With my oldest pipe and best blend, one of Booth Tarkington's "Penrod" stories, Chester Reed's "Bird Guide," Schuyler Mathews's "Field Book of Wild Flowers," a sumptuous lunch from the Mansion House and this old note-book wherein I wrote many notes which now I cannot read.

The only thing in sight to suggest the normalcy of modernity was the Grand Trunk Railway Station, and even that had its limitations, for it was grim, and drab, and tumbledown, and bore no message of latter-day invention. There was only one train a day, up and down, and the stolid, uncommunicative agent moved slowly about in a halo of ancient and uninteresting history.

Memory Village

For weeks I had been viewing the landscape o'er from my window, across fields and pastures, out over the ponds and tops of tall pines in the valley, on to distant mountains. With the eye ever resting on a little green spot far away on the side of a hill just at the edge of some deep and dark evergreen woods, a very tempting oasis in the north country wilderness. I looked for it the first thing in the morning, admired its fresh, unpainted beauty in the spotlight of the midday sun, and then found myself each evening—rather childishly I confess,—casting a long, lingering look just as the sun went down. It was a lacking, lonesome day when the mists hid its handsome face. It became a very personal, intimate green spot; and soon intimate possession became aim and ambition.

At last the day! And I packed off to the little land of my dreams. In order not to lose any time, George, the barber, who reads Thoreau and Louisa Alcott between cuts, and owns a very considerable touring car, motored me to the foot of the hill.

I had waited through many days of spring mists and winds for weather like this. It was one of those dry, clear, crisp, cheerful late-in-May mornings which Hardy mirrors so well in Old England but which always seem clearer, crisper and more cheerful in New England, because, of course, first of all it's home, and second, no doubt, because there is a

certain rarity in the air here which the tight little isle of the misty North Atlantic can never know.

And what so clear and inspiriting as one of these northwesters of the northeast, sweeping down from the great pine woods and bringing life and health and hope, with white clouds scudding from the mountains, over the lower hills, across the fields and valleys, and out to sea? Quite true there is the reverse side of the picture. A shift of a few points over to the other side of north and there is nothing quite so raw as some days in June. But life is pleasant by change and contrast, and there is little that is more important, or frequent, or more sudden sometimes, up here in Maine, than a change in the weather.

But this wonderful May morning left nothing to be desired and no change was imminent. The peak of old Kearsarge seemed only over in the next town. Washington and Tuckerman's ravine, in fact the whole Presidential range, quite fifty miles as the black duck flies, seemed just across the Middle Range Pond.

"What do you make 'em out to be?" asked Charles Noble looking over into the Northwest. "Plymouth Rocks or Rhode Island Reds?"

"Where?" I asked.

"Up there in Gorham, New Hampshire."

This was our stock clear weather joke on the hill that spring.

Memory Village

Arrived now at the oasis, it was all that fancy painted. Here was my little spot on the hill, edged with moss, and banked with pines and spruces, and dry and fresh and clean, with its carpet of pine needles just thick enough to make it soft and enticing but not enough to deaden the fresh green colors of spring; and commanding a view at once magnificent and charming, if one may be allowed to employ both of these extravagant terms. Down through a long valley, stretching quite ten miles to the south, a chain of ponds, connected one with the other now by small arms of still water, now by swiftly running brooks and streams, and banked on either side by long chains of hills, steep and abrupt nearby and gradually sloping into gentle undulations, as they reached out toward the far-off sea with field and pastures and the spring green of the hard woods against the dark background of evergreens. A grand sight, for this was the Maine hill country as well.

Quite all that fancy painted indeed, but much more. For sleeping there at the foot of the hill in the warmth of the morning sun, lay the little village of many memories, in the very near foreground, almost at my feet, and, as it turned out during the day, at my service, the very village of boyhood now so long ago. This had not appeared in the outlook from the window, and I had not only the satisfac-

tory realization of my oasis dreams but this new element of pleasant surprise.

So I ensconced underneath the bough with a jug of coffee, and half a loaf of bread, and cold chicken, and sausage, apple pie and doughnuts, and cheese, and settled down for a livelong day of contentment and vision.

Just then, the up-train whistled in. No one called it the eight-thirty or the morning. It was "up" and always will be the "up." A solitary passenger alighted and I could see him at this distance shake hands with the depot master, and then pass on up the track. Pretty soon he came along the road winding up the hill just beneath me. He seemed to be a very human boy of the genus freshman, with a canvas suit case held by a shawl strap, a thin and muddy raincoat over his arm, a soft dark green department store hat and an atmosphere of thrifty and serviceable ready-madeness about all his clothes. He whistled, and stopped to rest and look down the valley, and picked a dandelion, and smelled it, and put it in his buttonhole. I paused in my Schuyler Mathews analysis of some lowly weed and observed the passing human show, noting automatically all the details. The parade of youth is ever interesting and inspiring.

His father met him up the road and I could see the homely greeting, and imagine, too, that I heard it

all. Here was the great drama of life. Was it tragedy or only pleasant comedy? Had he been expelled from school or college, or lost his job in the city, or was he only home for a well-earned holiday to see the folks and fish the brooks? Alas, we shall never know. But whatever it was, he found welcome and sympathy, for dad put his hand on his shoulder and took his satchel. I could see it all quite plainly and, as they passed round the bend, I fancied I heard a jolly laugh.

And then a flood of many memories, reaching back to careless, happy days when impression was vivid and the mind plastic, when the small incidents of every-day life were events, when the first skates, the first fish pole, a bumble-bee sting, and the winter pig killing were milestones of history. This quite simple incident of the boy and the little village stretching out in one drowsy street before me had wonderful powers of suggestion. Either, detached, would have carried me back many years. The combination was overwhelming. It was all only yesterday.

Strange, though this was late spring, and all about was alive with early summer growth, and a few barn swallows were dipping here and there; though every outward activity of the cheerful day would naturally suggest anything but the frozen months, by some strange freak of contrast, my first

recollections went back to the winters of boyhood. They were long and dismal in our little town. February and March dragged out in an endless monotony of gray and spiritless days. There was no immediate prospect of anything at all worth living for. Summer would never come because, intervening, there were two months of mud and consequent inaction, when nobody went anywhere, when nobody came, when people "only set and thought, and some only set." Days that tried boys' souls.

And I have often thought that boys whose souls were tried by days like these had advantage in the battles of life. Climate, quite as much as personal contact and teaching, help to mould character. Just as Henry Adams says, the boys of New England have a wider range of emotions than those of even climes.

Who can forget the sad sunset hour of a February Sunday afternoon, when hope was at its lowest ebb, molasses candy a sin, and popcorn, less worldly, only a compensation for staying in and keeping still. It was then, of course, that the good mothers of the sixties and seventies thought it best to interpret the Bible to their children, and a chapter in the Young People's Bible History, which should have been a message of cheer and comfort and helpful instruction, was always associated with this zero hour. It was a hard test for religion, and I have always admired those who persevered over such severe handi-

caps. Much of the beauty of the Bible, its hope and cheer, was lost to us because of this misguided association. A drab Sunday afternoon in winter is not the time, the haircloth parlor of a country village house not the place. Special pleading, lame excuse, you may say, but the poor fact remains.

Events, of course, were few in the winter season and therefore stood out in silhouettes, those of pleasure and pain alike. Thus, I now remember, did I hear my first joke—the first to be really appreciated.

El'ry York's boy Jim was the town clown of the younger generation. He floated through life on a broad grin and without the least suggestion of any earnestness of purpose. He had the courage to run from a fight and then at a distance which he knew to be quite safe, both by instinct and experience, to turn and laugh his antagonist out of court and out of temper as well. He had marked deficiencies in both mental and physical dexterity but these were all overbalanced by a genuine. bubbling mirthfulness, disarming, if not exciting complete sympathy. He never could do anything right, yet everybody always liked to have him around. One of those human contradictions that often happen in village life. Although, as you see, possessing individuality of his own, he was always known as El'ry's boy.

When North Winds Blow

This particular winter had made a world's record up here in the Maine lake country. One big storm had followed another and existence was a continual process of shoveling out. Here it was the last of March and not only no sign of spring, but the worst blizzard of all. It had been snowing all night and all day, and blowing all the while into unheard-of drifts. No mail, no school, no roads, not even a path. El'ry's boy Jim came stomping into Hen Goulding's store, slamming the door, kicking off the snow, toe on heel, heel on toe, shaking his cap and mittens, digging out his ears, and, of course, grinning. The men were sitting about the stove spitting. One or two boys were standing around looking at the show-case and hoping somebody would treat. Everybody looked up at Jim and for the moment he held the stage center.

There was a brief period of awkward silence that seemed to call for action. Somebody broke in with a side remark about it's lookin' lowery, Jim, and might snow 'fore mornin'. But it was lame, and tame, altogether inadequate. It was Hen who came to the rescue. Hen had played in William Tell at the Levee the winter before and this winter had been known to essay, in private, a bit of more advanced reading.

"Oh, Ho," says he,

"Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer, by this sun of York."

That night, after supper, my sister got out the Rolfe edition and I made acquaintance with the master. Needless to say, my first impression was that he was a great humorist.

This led to other ventures in literature and I soon became a constant reader and close student of the "All Sorts" column of the Boston Post, Harper's Drawer, and the last page of Harper's Bazaar. The neighbors exchanged newspapers and periodicals freely and there was a wide range. My contribution to the system of swapping was the old Boston Commercial Bulletin, a weekly of four pages of tremendous size. It had a long and wonderful column of jokes made up largely of quotations from the Danbury News, Detroit Free Press, Josh Billings, Petroleum V. Nasby, and an entirely new school of humorists of the Middle West, where the raw conditions of pioneer river life seemed to encourage wit easily understood by the country boy of those days. I always got the Post and Harper's Bazaar for this, and an iron-clad guarantee of return, for its paper was thick and heavy, and my mother and aunts used it for the buttery shelves.

Skates, as I now remember, were the most impressive of all the implements of winter sport. The boys of our day saw wonderful development. We all learned on the old string skates, with the low, thin runner of hammered steel, curling up over the toe, the more elaborate and fancy ending in an acorn

point of welded brass. The stout leather strings, which we always kept well greased, passed through loops in straps that fitted around the ankle and over the toes, and when pulled tight over copper-toed boots, and tied and tied again, in half hitches and square knots, would last us out the day with little readjustment.

And I say "the day" without qualification. Many the time have I put on skates on old Snow Pond in early morning and never taken them off till after sunset. With apples and nuts, and on rare occasions raisins, for lunch, and for liquid refreshment a good, long swig of water through a hole in the ice, lying flat on the stomach the while. Once, while in this rather ungraceful position, Ollie Hersom's mittens on his outstretched hands froze to the ice and we had much ceremony and considerable delay and fun in extricating him. Someone held his feet, while someone else held his nose under water for a time. The stage was all set for a first class fight, but we could all beat him at speed skating. There is no indignity quite like having one's nose held under water.

Then came the rockers, with solid runners curved at both ends, screws for the heel of the boot and brads for the toe to keep them from slipping sideways; with heavy and wide leather straps, heel and toe, and strong iron buckles. And coincident with the rocker skates the first attempt at fancy skating.

George Hovey set the pace. He had lived in Canada and there had learned a few figures. Up to this time, the outside edge and cutting the circle, forward and backward, had been about all we had seen. There were rumors, one winter, that June Boardman could write his name on the ice but no one of the younger boys had actually seen him do it. June was a great artist and the first to master the figure eight, but glacial chirography was a bit advanced for our time and I still have my doubts.

Mister Prentiss, by the way, was the first to attract our attention in the matter of graceful skating. Mister Prentiss was a poet in motion. But George was the Irving Brokaw of our town and time. It was he who taught us the Dutch roll, the single and double locomotive, the grapevine, and other importations from far-off Canada, where, we imagined, there was ice the whole year round.

After the rockers, almost the last of the wood family, followed in rapid succession all kinds of all metal clamp skates, the Acme and the Barney and Berry inventions, which caused no end of wonder, for there were no rich little boys in our little town.

We had no hockey in those days. Our only ice contest, besides straight away racing, was a game called Coram. I have never seen it played since or anywhere else. And I now wonder if any reader remembers it. I have asked many skaters but no one who was not a boy in our town seems to recol-

lect. It was very simple, but required speed and dexterity. The fittest prolonged his life but did not survive. Any number could play and we sometimes had twenty boys in a game lasting for hours. A line about sixty feet long was marked on the ice with a small pile of sticks at each end. At the beginning one skater, chosen by lot, took the line. The others gathered a hundred yards down the pond, called "Coram" and the chase was on. Those who were touched by the lineman before passing through, helped him on the line on the next run, until finally, often after half a dozen runs, the last man was caught. Then we began all over again, the first man caught, taking the line alone. The fastest and best skater was, of course, the last to be caught and sometimes it took more than one trial for the whole crowd to tap him before he could cross the line. Warren Hersom was our champion for many winters. Mister Prentiss would have shared honors with him, but the game was a bit worldly and he held aloof.

We sometimes had minor skating on the muck holes in late October, but not for long. This was more a matter of record and boasting than anything else. The quest of the first ice was an important function in fall and the discoverer of anything that would hold was a hero for the day. Thanksgiving, as a rule, found good ice on the Meadow and in rare years, on the big pond. This was the high

water mark of early winter activity. Would we have skatin' Thanksgivin'? Always a question as important as the turkey itself. And if so, what a grand holiday!

There is something indescribably inspiring about a big field of black ice. It grips young and old alike. It tempts one on to broader fields both of imagination and action. It buckles and cracks, and echoes and re-echoes up and down the long reaches of evergreen woods. Perhaps, with its air holes and unexpected thin spots, it illustrates too well life's uncertainties, but boyhood is buoyant, and once afield and in the swing of those long outside strokes, with mile on mile behind you, it dissipates all of life's little ironies and everything is clear ahead. There are no insurmountable difficulties along the level stretches of a frozen lake. Only a great and pleasant adventure.

Sleds came next. There was no coasting in those days. We just slid. Up the long and steep hills we trudged, sometimes hooking on to a wood team or sleigh—and then that long slide down! Over jounces, around the corners, steering with the toe of the boot, on and on down the main street of the village. Winslow's store was the end of the line for our long hill. The boy making the greatest distance was champion and we all inspected his sled to

see how we could improve our own. The competitive spirit pervaded all sports then as now. There was skill, too, in the process of sliding. Steering with the least amount of friction and an active mentality in selecting the smooth spots ahead were the greatest aids to success. The long pointer with round, springy steel runners finally proved the best model for speed and distance.

In the last analysis we all standardized on this so that skill in operation became the single test for "going furtherest." The sleds all had names painted in big letters on both sides, such as Rover, Pathfinder, Hunter, Deerslayer, General Grant, Goldsmith Maid, Raven, Eagle. There were others, too, in commemoration of some person or event of local renown and humorous in character. But these come readily to mind. Jim Stevens's Goldsmith Maid was in the big money for two entire winters. I remember that Frank Hubbard, something of a genius in nomenclature, had a big carry-all sort of affair which he called Bummijo, unhyphenated as he spelled it, and a name of uncertain origin and significance. He just rolled it out one day and it seemed to fit and forever after stuck. The old sled had a personality and was famous all over the town for many years. It was especially popular with the girls during the crusts of March and, you can imagine, was often borrowed.

Memory Village

The indoor sport of winter that meant most in my young life was the annual Levee. This was a wonderful affair. It always came in March, the country's dull month, and lasted three nights. I can hardly call to mind an institution so influential in the formative period, in the matter of both business and pleasure. It was the means of raising money to pay for the Soldiers' Memorial Hall and was continued for years.

The entertainment ran the whole scale, from Shakespeare and Sheridan to the inevitable village "nigger show." We had talent in grand array and infinite variety. I remember best John Hubbard's "Ingomar" and Will Smith's clog dance. There was every gambling device known to modern science to catch the small change of the patriotic—all kinds of guessing games, pound cake, ring cake, grab-bags galore, until the last night, the night of all nights, when the grand lottery was drawn. We had many tickets in our family, many years, but fortune only favored us with a small two-kerosene-light chandelier, for which we had no appropriate location, and one silver-plated fruit knife. All the churches participated in the Levee, but the "wicked Universalists," as Squire Ayer called them, usually took charge of the sporty features.

This reminds me that old Major Davis once said that he took a Universalist weekly for himself but subscribed for a Christian paper for his wife.

When North Winds Blow

It was a day of great calamity when the last note on that hall was paid.

Town Meeting comes back to me in faint memories of many horses hitched in the meeting house shed and the continual loud shouting of Mister Folger who was always moderator: **"Boys! Stop that noise!"**

The first warm days of spring we played in the haymows and rummaged the attic. The attic! —filled to the rafters with history, tragedy, comedy and poetry, for here were all the old scrap-books— Phoebe Carey and John G. Whittier; and pictures from Harper's Weekly and Oliver Optic's. Not a paragraph in a chapter,—not a chapter. The old attic is worth a volume.

The circus, Fourth of July, and swimming stood out in summer. This whole grand season of outdoor glory centered around these three events. If the circus came in June, the Fourth marked the end of the world. Not even swimming, which in those days had the added attraction of something prohibited, could compensate.

I can see now how much we missed in nature. There was no one to point out to us the summer's glorious unfolding. Nature studies were unheard of. Thoreau in the written word had not reached our little town. John Burroughs was wasting his

time and his genius in some dusty Washington department. Flowers were only for good little girls, and teachers, and funerals, unassociated with anything vital and manly. The wonders of bird-land were something to stone and shoot. Blue jays were hardest to kill. How I shudder now when I think of the beauty of those lovely decorations of the woods. I saw a whole flock one bright sunny morning last spring against a background of fresh, clean snow, and properly atoned. How much we all lost! When I realize what the children of today have gained in appreciation of the simple things of nature by the simplest of teaching I forget much of the cheap in the progress of the race and am consoled.

The circus was the great myth of childhood. At first we only knew it by vague rumor. Then it came to the nearest big town and grew into reality. Ed Harris, riding by with his father, had seen the tent. Elephants, and striped horses, and men and women in pink tights, and flying rings, and horizontal bars and clowns, and cornballs and red lemonade, certainties at last! One otherwise calm morning came the rumor that the show would pass through our village at sunrise next day. More important still, "the three elephants three" would be watered at the town landing on the pond, and, if so disposed, would bathe and splash. We were all there of course. Some of the boys sat up all night and went far out on the road to meet the strange procession.

When North Winds Blow

It was my first experience and I shall never forget its fascination. I have seen many circuses since then, —never miss one if I can help it. I have even sat in the grand entrance of a three-ring, four-platform affair and chatted with Poodles Hannaford, which is the thirty-third degree in circus fandom. But I have never been more awed and inspired than when I saw those "three elephants three" loom up over Belgrade Hill out of the mists of the morning.

One of our boys, Pem Whorf, more reckless and venturesome than the others, ran away with that circus and didn't come back for a week. He got an awful licking at home, but he was a hero to the rest of us for many a day to come.

And then, at last! P. T. Barnum himself! In person. He surely appeared. I can see him now, sitting in the roped entrance to the menagerie tent watching the ticket takers—benign, Bryanesque, paternal. Climax of boyhood.

Just why noise, in all its infinite variety, should be an expression of patriotism and commemorate the great deeds of the founders of the republic, is one of the unsolved mysteries of human psychology. But noise was the Fourth of July and the Fourth of July was noise. It all began on the evening of the third with common fire-crackers and an occasional giant. Then at sharp midnight, the high, rasping metallic tenor of the Universalist bell rang out and at the

same time the old cannon boomed forth down on the cattle yard ball-ground. These kept up till sunrise when there was brief cessation for breakfast. Dewey, by the way, was a New Englander.

The parade of horribles—fantastics, as they were always called—came at six o'clock. Then the day wore on through a forenoon of more noise, swelling out at noon with the Universalist bell and cannon again, an afternoon of crude baseball and an evening of simple fireworks, until finally everybody, men, women, and children, went to bed completely exhausted. Therefore, the day we celebrate had been a great success.

One feature of the Fourth, I remember, was very impressive. Jim Breck always had fifty cents to spend during the day and just as he saw fit. He invariably chose to invest it all in one grand splurge of torpedoes. He had a genius for this particular outlet of enthusiasm and was an authority on this particular explosive. We hung around him till noon, when the last of the five packages was usually gone. For years he was known as Torpedo Jim.

Swimming was tame excitement after these grand events but it tided us over many a long summer's day. There were no grand Dukes of the water in our time, no one to teach us speed strokes and stunts. We all had to be content with plain accomplishment. And then one sad day, in the march of industrial progress, and rudely exercising the right

of eminent domain, came a corn factory and located close by the Old Oak. Soon the old hole was filled with sharp pieces of refuse tin and we took to prosaic berrying and ladylike four-old-cat.

All this and more came back to me in youthful fancy as I sat there that long, delightful day underneath the pine. It was an experience worth having and I was grateful for a memory that included unimportant details.

Then I strolled down into the little village. Just to see if it was true to the picture of perspective. Had it tricked me into these thoughts of long ago, or was it typical? I knew the risk of dispelled illusion, but could not resist.

There was much to remove the impressions of middle century simplicity which I had been indulging all day, like plowing by tractor for instance, and separators. but more to keep me attuned to the past. The experiment as a whole was successful.

The housewife, who had come out to see if the clothes were dry enough to take in and sprinkle, feeling cotton mentionables and flannel unmentionables with equal unconsciousness and abandon, talked on and on in an endless confusion of words and ideas.

Of one thing she seemed quite certain. There'd been no spring like this since she didn't know when.

Memory Village

Everybody two weeks ahead house cleanin' and plowin'. The weather, as always and everywhere in the simple life, the great factor in existence and the first topic of talk. The community chore man, wheeling in the winter's wood, of single track mind and unconfused by thoughts of international obligations and national reconstruction—he, too, was weatherwise. No five o'clock whistle for him. Goin' to get 'er all in tonight anyway. Might rain tomorrow. The store man talked about the weather, the blacksmith, the school teacher. The universal subject of the centuries; all races, all languages, all climates.

There was the long, peaceful village street, just as I had imagined it, calm, quiet, unpretending; with its clean white houses, its fenced front yards, its hitching posts, its elms and maples, its budding lilacs, syringas and chaste snowdrops—sleeping in the afternoon sun. Midway, the village church, of Sir Christopher Wrenn green and white beauty if not the grandeur of his lines. And, fitting the day and the scene, completing the picture, Mr. Taylor, who keeps bees, grows the best peonies in town, sings tenor in the choir and wears grey suede gloves.

He stood against a background of shining milk cans upside down on the picket fence; of uncertain age—seventy, perhaps,—fresh, immaculate, the embodiment of all that was gentle, correct, orderly and learned. Someone told me that his closest friend

was Cy Wyman, big, awkward, raw-boned, freckled, red-headed and at times violently profane. An association of strange contrasts. They often drove about the country together looking at farms, gardens and cattle. The teacher called them Beauty and the Beast.

Four o'clock. School is out. The children are staying to play on the fresh green turf.

Round the green carpet here we stand,
Take your true love by the hand,
Take the one that you love best
Before you close your eyes to rest.

Oh! what a beautiful choice you've made
Don't you wish you'd longer stayed?
Give her a kiss and send her away,
And tell her you'll come some other fine day.

I could hardly believe it. The familiar old kissing game of the sixties and seventies. I didn't know there were such children as these left in all the world. Quickly came back to me the memory of many others, clap in and clap out, needle's eye, post-office, chase the squirrel, who's got the button? Copenhagen.

Yes, I found just such a little town as this. Way up here in the Maine lake country. What a day!

Memory Village

And now it is the fall of the year. And today I went down into the little village again. There was a bit of blight about. The business of being a slow, clean, ingenuous, charming, wholesome, safe, sane and salubrious country village, the village of the poet and true bucolic, was stunted. Its progress in delightful unprogressiveness was in arrest. It was the blight of modern civilization, and its foundation stone, modern science. And the blight of only a single summer.

It seemed to me that nothing had escaped, not even the station agent. The dust of the automobile had settled down, and people were in a hurry, in aimless, tired, and careworn confusion. The telephone was ringing every few minutes in the store. Couldn't Charlie bring up that sugar right away? Lil couldn't come down; getting ready to go to the movies over to the Falls in the auto; and the preserves was all on.

The effect of four trains a day instead of two was in evidence. It is difficult to write down in words this manifestation. One could feel four trains—could not escape it. But description? Quite impossible. There was nonchalance about the farmer who brought the big milk cans for the down. Last spring, I remembered, he unloaded them from his wagon to the platform truck with care and ceremony, each in its measured place. Now he was slatting them about impersonally, with no thought but

to hasten and get away. No passing the time of day with the depot loafers. In fact—can you believe it? —no loafers. Their leisurely philosophy lost to the world! I know there are busy, materialistic but otherwise intelligent people, who will not regret this passing. But I cannot understand them. The ingenious reasoning of country ne'er-do-wells on the sunny side of a country depot is instructive. It rightfully belongs to American democracy.

A "garage" had sprung up over night. An ungainly, red gasoline pump, advertising in cheap and small abbreviation, a large and wealthy oil company, obtruded on the village street. An unmusical tin-pan was grinding out "Whispering" somewhere up the road, and innocent, dirty little children were fox-trotting in the dust. A motor-cycle whizzed through, leaving a confused impression of soiled khaki and goggles. The little story and a half houses, the grange hall, the blacksmith shop, the white-fenced graveyard, all bespoke anachronism.

Even the village church, so charming and peaceful and restful in the spring, the little village church with all its country dignity, had not escaped the general sacrilege. For there, propped up against a corner of the steps, was a picture theatre billboard, loud, flamboyant and vulgar; announcing of course, the world's greatest squash-pie-throwing comedian, together with other congenial and inspiring attractions; Wednesday and Saturday nights; at the Empire; 7.30 sharp; good music.

And now, perhaps, saddest of all, exit from the kitchen door, Lil, who was Lillian or our daughter, and something of a rustic dream, in the spring,—Lil, in battle array for conquest at the Falls. I will only mention the bobbed hair, carefully and elaborately worked up into big black bunches over the ears, and suggesting some tawdry queen of the Nile transplanted for the Fourth of July fantastics.

Such is progress, such the influence of example. We all have our individual responsibilities, even the inventor of something new in coiffure.

We cannot escape the march of civilization, we village people. It is one of the inevitables, like death, and taxes, and wars, and bad government. But if we could only avoid certain intermediate stages of the process! The old, the original, was better than the present. The ultimate, when genuine and generous human nature will finally find free expression in improved environment, will be better than the old. If we could only cover the whole distance in one grand jump!

Even then, we will hark back to the days when life was simple and emotions gentle, when we shared with nature the un-hurried joys of living, when milking time was a period of contented meditation, when sunset and evening star marked the end of a day of calm endeavor and the beginning of a night of peaceful rest.

CHAPTER VII

The Big Country

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The Big Country

I

AND now we are far away from these little villages, away from cultivation, from the fields and orchards, from all the complexities and perplexities of community life. It has its charm, its inspiration, nevertheless. We have tarried because it was hard to get away. Somehow we felt at home, settled down and comfortable. But for sake of variety, yielding to that ever present and ever restless desire for change, and man's natural animal craving for something wild, we are now up in the big country. Big timber, big lakes, big game, the big life of the open, vast, boundless, trackless. The moose is a big animal. This is a big country and it is in his name.

Arriving anywhere on the shores of this lake, by whatever means of civilized transportation, you at once go through a process of mental readjustment that brings touch with the big things of creation. Big is exactly the word. No other quite expresses the Moosehead Lake region. You become absorbed immediately in wider contemplation and sink unconsciously into new surroundings. You are part of the scenery; one of the Indians. That's your canoe there, and gun, and duffel. If you don't change your shirt inside of fifteen minutes it is because the

luggage is late. And moccasins at once. Of course! Moosehead grips you and holds you just like that—makes you a part of itself, forthwith and without the least desire for resistance.

The William Tell Club, a company of erudite city gentlemen organized for the purpose of advanced study of the higher mental processes and for other and more abstruse forms of psychical research, comes up here every year in order to get background and test new theories on the origin of man, and the birth, growth and development of man's emotional nature. It is an old and famous body and has a wonderful eyrie-like home on Spencer Pond just off the main lake, where the surroundings and equipment lend to high thinking and the discussion and solution of those recondite problems which for centuries have absorbed the world's greater minds. A sort of improved, advanced, modern Brook Farm.

It should be stated, in strict justice to the progress made, that this particular body of water was selected because of its name at a time when the organization was in its infancy and Herbert Spencer was regarded as something of a philosopher. They enter the primeval wilderness in October, and with appropriate ceremony. Passing up Spencer Bay, at a point directly opposite the mouth of the River Kokadjo, each member divests, mundanely speaking, and transforms himself into a disembodied spirit in order to form contact with absent intellects, both

of the past and the present. All carry guns, ammunition and other trappings of the hunter—and some of them hunt—to create atmosphere and illustrate the otherwise indescribable contrast between primal man and man's present high estate. It is a marvelous setting and sometime the thinking world—when the thinking world is ready—will profit by marvelous revelation.

Not the least of the mental qualities of the Spencer Pond philosophers is the power of appreciation. This is of high voltage. And while we seem to have written somewhat lightly of their association with the wilderness and decivilization of the Moosehead country it has had purpose in that it brings out with vividness the first and last impressions of these big woods and waters. The next thing to actually and first personally feeling Moosehead is to have a William Tell tell about it.

Up here you seem to have gone out of your own time and country. A night and half a day from Fifth Avenue, a single day even from Tremont and Boylston, and the grand enchantment of real, genuine, unforced wild life is yours but for the railroad fare. The pleasant commotion of the little dock by the Kineo House is a striking scene in itself. The red flannel shirts, and black shirts, and shirts of big checks of the big, rangy guides, the high boots and heavy moccasins, the guns and rods and axes, the rolls of blankets, bags of tin things, of potatoes, cans

of coffee and bacon—all the glorious paraphernalia of glorious living in the open start the red blood and stimulate rugged emotions.

Everybody is in the big swing of the out-of-doors. The stir is contagious. They're off to the North-east —canoes, guides, all the equipment—sometimes a whole family! The little steamer is down to the guards with camp luggage, and anticipation, and open-air good cheer. So long and good luck! See you up the West Branch! Many a time have I been in, gone no further north than this little clearing house for canoe trips and yet felt all the Moosehead thrills. More good luck if you happen to be on hand to welcome a coming-out party. Tanned, unshaven faces of true woodsmen, the air and carriage of strength and endurance, pots and pans blackened by many a green wood fire, deer and other game if in the fall, trout, salmon and togue if in summer, the deep breathing of good health and good time—they all bring tidings of the northland, unmistakable, irresistible. There is sometimes, too, the fascination of a slightly foreign touch, a mixture of Indian and French-Canadian gesture and vernacular, that carry one way up into Gilbert Parker's Quebec land, to Charley Steele, to the Indians of the St. Maurice, and interesting French priests of lac and riviere.

One gets personal impressions in this country clean-cut and distinct. People who live the year out here look upon human existence as a matter of

great seriousness. Conditions have made them less plastic, and the traveler has made less impression. Their fathers and mothers struggled against the elements, some of them against the Indians. Living came from the flint-lock,—and sometimes protection—and from the spear and snare. There is still something left of this atmosphere north of Squaw Mountain. Cultivation is sparse and even small settlements are infrequent. The primitive is everywhere the prevailing note, one of the very few sections of New England where the suggestion of colonial life of the forests can still be felt—perhaps the last. There is no time for life's little amenities, for life is solemn and real. So seldom do some residents hold converse that the spoken word becomes event. The idea that anyone can offer greeting just for the purpose of civility, that he can speak for no other reason than passing the time of day, never seems to have occurred.

One evening in September—and not so many years ago—just at dusk I sat on the bank of Moose River waiting for fly-fishing companions to come down from the shoals and shingles above. My own casting, as usual, had been unproductive and I preferred to rest and read on shore. Two Indians came up the river in an Oldtown canoe, old Moosehead guides whom we had seen that morning at Kineo station. One of them lay drunk, his head in the bow. The other paddled unsteadily in the stern but

with the Indian instinct for direction and an even keel. The conscious one was chanting some weird, woodland dirge and the combination in the gathering and otherwise silent evening was uncanny in sight and sound. I had no desire to exchange verbal or other courtesies and they passed on without seeing me.

Pretty soon an old gentleman of the wilderness came rowing slowly and silently by in a skiff, with bags and boxes in the stern, doubtless a small farmer who lived on one of the clearings further up the river. A different story. Here was one of my kind, and sober. It was the most natural thing in the world to pass the time of day. Moose River is not a densely populated thoroughfare. Besides, it was timely opportunity to shake off the gruesomeness of the previous scene, and doubly welcome was this white man companionship. So I said, cheerily, in voice pleasant and mellow:

"Fine evening, sir."

He stopped rowing and looked around. And remained in this tense position for some time.

"Fine evening, sir," I repeated, louder, having, of course, no desire to delay him.

He put his hand up to his ear.

"Fine evening!"

"Won't you say that again? I'm a little hard of hearing."

I said, "It's a fine evening, sir," now shouting.

He turned the skiff and rowed toward shore.

I got up and went down to head him off, tripping on an unseen root.

"Nothing, sir, nothing," I shouted. "I was only just saying hello!"

"Won't you wait till I get ashore. I can't hear," and on he came, getting out and hauling up in the mud. Coming close up to me he again hollowed his hand behind his ear. If I looked as foolish as I felt any man not hopelessly insane himself would have taken me for a confirmed idiot, No. 1, Class A. I was completely at sea and had no mental resources. All I could think of was that stupid, silly, meaningless word:

"Hello!"

And I shouted it to the top of my lungs, as though it meant life or death.

"That wan't what you said to start with. What was that?"

Recovering a bit I shouted close into his ear: "I was only passing the time of day, sir. It's a fine evening. Fine evening."

"Yes, 'tis," and he went, stolid and unconcerned, back to his boat. There was water in the bottom and as I helped him shove off we upset a paper bag of corn meal which his rubber boots mixed into porridge before its time. Before anything else could happen he settled down to the oars. I had that guiltiest feeling, and without in the least thinking

of any new consequences, quite naturally and politely shouted: "Well, so long, sir."

"What's that?" he said, again resting on his oars and putting up his hand. "Won't you say that—"

I rushed into the water up to my hips, headed the skiff up stream and gave a mighty shove. Returning to my place on the bank I found I had stepped on, broken and completely ruined my best briar pipe.

"See anybody up stream?" I asked when the other fellows came down.

"Couple of illuminated Indians."

"Anybody else?"

"Yes. Crazy man. All we said was, 'Fine evening, sir,' quite pleasantly, and he pulled for the shore, sailor, and took to the woods. Queer old loon."

Such the inanity of urbanity—sometimes.

Moosehead is the father of Maine's inland waters. It is the largest of all the lakes and by far the most interesting. It has distinct individuality. One might well call it personality. It is masculine, forceful, dominating, of changing moods. There is so much that is human and virile about it that one feels comprehension and community. There is no other fresh water where I have in the slightest degree any of the feelings inspired by the ocean. I do not mean the awe and reverence that can be neither analyzed nor described, nor yet the impres-

sion of extent, of majesty and mystery. These are experienced by the sea and only by the sea, not only when in sight and sound but when anywhere near it. The similarity is found in lighter emotions. One is always interested and there is no suggestion of monotony.

I could sit a lifetime by the sea alone and never be lonely. Something new and stimulating to the imagination with each new hour. Change always. Moosehead is interesting, not to this high degree of satisfaction but in the same manner. There are no lonesome moments here. There is, too, to an extent, the same variety of scenery. The bays, coves, inlets, and sometimes the lay of the islands, give suggestion of Maine's wonderful ocean shores. This can better be appreciated when we consider the official measurements which show a north and south length of thirty-eight miles and a coast line of four hundred. This was surprising news when I read it this morning and convinced me that the dry and ponderous figures of government documents are not to be overlooked. Some of them, I find, especially in reference to this interesting State, have the grip of exciting romance.

The elevation of the lake is a thousand feet above the sea and in places there is great depth. Soundings of more than nine hundred feet have been reported. The air in winter has Arctic vigor and in summer is always cool and stimulating. North

winds prevail, bringing down from great storehouses of health the tonic of balsam and pine that never fails. Cheer and energy ride the breezes. I saw a pale, pindling big city family get off the train at Greenville one morning and in the short drag from the sleeper to the Coburn Steamboat Company's Majestic of the Inland Seas, develop a first-class domestic row over a misplaced thermos bottle. It wasn't even lost; only in one bag when it should have been in another. All hands joined in, and at one time it looked as though the train hands and steamboat hands would have to interfere in order to get the boat away on time.

Now mark the change, the transition from one state of mind to quite another under the influence of this big lake country air—for the whole scene was state of mind and nothing more. Off Lily Bay the children came to, youth of course rebounding more quickly. Half-way up to West Outlet father filled his pipe and began to point out things on shore. At Gilbert's, Mount Kineo now looming in somber majesty, and making everything else, including family jars, look small and petty, mother smiled and exclaimed: "Isn't it wonderful, dear?" Under the shadow of one of the grand set-pieces of New England scenery the last of the recalcitrants laid down her arms. Everybody was forgiven and the thermos bottle forgotten. This is the greatest atmosphere for the reaction of sleeping car dispositions

to be found in all these United States of America, bar none.

A score of small rivers and large brooks, issuing from other lakes and ponds and draining meadows of great extent, pay tribute to Moosehead. While there is no considerable current in the main body the waters are ever changing, and, being also deep, are quite cool even in the summer months. This gives temper to the air and there is nothing like it as a summer resort in the inland east. The largest and most important of the affluents is Moose River, running direct from Brassua Lake on the west and into Moosehead at its narrowest part and almost directly opposite the Kineo House. I have already pointed out in a previous chapter the wonders of the view up this interesting little river. The camera caught it one day when the whole region was in especially pleasant mood and cloud effects enhancing. The outlook is from the tip-top of the mountain. If the engraver is an appreciative soul—and no doubt he is—and has an eye for the beauty and bigness of natural scenery like this—and no doubt he has—and will do his best—and no doubt he will—he can make any attempted word picture of mine look like a pied form five minutes before press time.

When North Winds Blow

Besides Brassua, Moose River drains a chain of lakes extending well over to the boundary ridge between Maine and Canada from whose western slopes flows the Chaudiere to the St. Lawrence. A country of romance and legend, of mixed breeds and mixed drinks, rugged and wild, where the Indian, the French Canadian and the plain United States are cast for forest drama, now of tragedy, now of comedy. And Jackman, history-making cosmopolis of the border in these days of modern constitutions, is its interesting and at times exciting community centre. The stage is always set here day and night. Sometimes nothing happens, sometimes everything. The state of expectancy is therefore tense and constant.

This was the little drama playing a one-night stand last fall. It came to me, not out of the dubious blue of a chair-car smoking room, but first-hand on the junction platform. I give it in briefest scenario just as related by a man who had an orchestra seat.

Act. I. State deputy seizes five gallons, pre-war and sure-fire, from high-powered Packard coming over the border line. Note: It is always a Packard; no one else can afford one. Brings it to the hotel of the wilderness metropolis and rests the night.

Act II. Morning. Same town, same hotel. Motor car. Driver displays badge of federal import; two men, hand-cuffed, back seat; thirty gallons, also

pre-war, high-proof, sure-kick. Deputy comes to door.

Driver: "Say, won't you telephone 'em down 't Skowhegan, I'm on the way with the stuff and the two men. They'll know."

Deputy: "Sure."

Business of starting the engine.

Deputy: "Goin' right down? Court house?"

Driver: "Man! I'm goin' to burn up the road."

Deputy: "Well, might just as well take along this five gallons of mine, too."

Driver: "Sure! Put 'er in."

He did.

Dots across the page right here.

The great North Bay of Moosehead, the biggest of its several big arms, also runs into scenery, and what is more, into still wilder life. It terminates in two arms of its own at the head of which are two interesting institutions of the big country, the Northwest Carry at Seboomook, and the Northeast, the taking-off place for all the canoe trips, hunting, fishing and lumbering expeditions of the upper Penobscot waters. Real life of the big woods and waters of Maine begins. Flavor up here—quality—and equality—true democracy.

Pretty soon some guide, cook or other camp retainer pays the delicate compliment of calling you by your first name. You feel established. The new

existence has begun. Nomad of the forests, just like the other nomads. There is a kind of satisfaction about the first name business up in the woods that cannot be quite explained. Sometimes it extends over the whole personnel of the expedition, and it is bound to succeed. One day up here I heard a handsome, curly-haired young husky call out to his dad: "Come on, old boy, get a move! Catch on to the bow there! Lift her up! Steady, now, steady! T'-a-boy! Some strong man, eh?" And the old boy seemed to like it tremendously. Both were hatless, highly sweatered, and properly knickerbockered and moccasined. No familiarity—not the slightest suggestion of disrespect—just the camaraderie of the open—delightful. Once up here at the Northeast, you'll quite understand it.

Sitting in the cabin of the schooner Bowdoin one day, just before she sailed north, I asked Don MacMillan what qualities he considered most important in selecting his companions for the long night of the Arctic.

"Disposition," he said at once, "good fellers, that's best of all. Got to start with that as a foundation or no use starting at all. Best man in the world for endurance, learning, science, instinct and inclination for Arctic work—and a little off color in the cheer-up line—and you're gone. A grouch can completely ruin the best equipment that ever went into the North."

Just so up here in the woods. Disposition is the whole story. Either one of these Carries is an interesting study in psychology. I knew that particular combination of father and son was going to have a good time. And it did. For I saw them one morning a few weeks later at breakfast at the Touraine.

"Good time?" I asked.

"Good time! Why, man alive, look at us! And look at this breakfast!"

But then, anyone who likes this Maine life of the big and the open, who is bound to have it, rain or shine, business or no business, is generally a pretty good feller to start with.

When you arrive at the head of this North Bay, the Carry stage of the journey, you have burned all the civilization bridges. No more railroads, no more automobiles, no more hotel life, no more of that delightful charm of the Kineo House, where all the modern attractions of a finely equipped summer resort are so combined with the life of the wild that both are made doubly pleasant, no more of metropolitan ease and comfort. Ah, but that greater comfort of the great out-of-doors, the life you've dreamed all these months of struggle, the life you have longed for! Happy days ahead! Good luck! See you at Umbazooksus.

But you will not forget in all your grand days and nights of the further north—never forget—that on

the way—on the way up the lake—you had views of combined water and mountain scenery that is not equalled in these eastern United States. If I mention Kineo again you will say I am prejudiced. Quite unnecessary. I admit it. There is something about this dark, stolid sentinel of the lake that will prejudice anyone. Without it Moosehead would still be splendid. With it, it is magnificent.

Let me bring to you other testimony than my own lame words—expert in fact—expert, and yet enthusiastic, rare combination. Stephen Putnam, traveler of the American continent far and wide; lover of this State and all that it contains, be it confessed, but not blind, or deaf, or lacking in appreciation when in others; an eye always for the beautiful in nature, generous and broad in his likings,—even international,—but one of your see-America-first men who has seen.

"Come with me," he said one evening at Kineo just after dinner. And he took me to one of the upper balconies of the hotel overlooking the broad arms of the lake reaching south and east. Only a step around the corner and we had the west view as well, Moose River and bits of moonlit water beyond. It was one of the cleanest, clearest nights I had ever seen anywhere, and yet the air was soft and warm. Flood of September moon—everywhere. The Spencer Mountains, I particularly remember, stood out silent and impressive. I always look for them first,

coming up the lake. Old friends tonight, in excellent form, eloquent and dominating as ever. The whole scene was enchanting. I was in touch, and listened with sympathy and pride.

"Young man," said he with sweeping gesture, "young man,"—it was years ago—"within a month I've crossed the continent for the eighth time—all the way from the Golden Gate. Leisurely and with my eyes open, as you can well imagine, who know my habits of travel. I saw big things in California, a whole lot of Colorado's best—many other things on the way. But truly I can say it, I've never anywhere, in any state, seen anything that grips me quite like this. Oh yes, I know! The canyons, great height of mountain, valleys almost without bottom, those wonderful redwood forests, the natural parks in the great West, and the great caves! I know! I know! Wonderful! Miracles of scenery! But they awe me so,—they frighten me. I can't understand them. But this, man,—this is where we live. No freaks of upheaval—not even the rock of a mountain behind us—no fantastics of unknown gods of unknown ages ago playing with mortals in gruesome grimace—none of that! But simple, natural, understandable, homely beauty that seems to have been created for normal human beings to appreciate and enjoy. It's wonderful! Look, man, look! Nowhere, to my mind, a combination of water and wooded mountain like this! I don't feel guilty of

any masterpiece of understatement, and yet I'm not sure that I've made you see it as I see it. Perhaps you've got to go across the country and back."

II

The so-called satellites of the Moosehead group are not satellites at all. Each lake and pond stands out by itself and shines by its own light. There are no minor bodies up here in the big country. Reads like a prospectus, I know. But it's true—true as truth itself, true as Mount Katahdin, as Kineo Rock. Everything is planetary.

Down in Monson, for instance, southeast of the main lake, south and southeast of Rum and Hedgehog, is a group, or chain, or collection,—whatever you will—of small lakes and ponds of interesting beauty and distinction. They compare with the reading notices of the famous foreign systems. Lake Hebron and Lake Onaway, which was once Ship Pond and afterward re-named to commemorate the beauty and romantic adventures of an Indian maiden of the Penobscot tribe, are outstanding stars. There are twenty-five ponds in this little town and two university professors, Chicago and Johns Hopkins. These gentlemen find compensation in the scenery of the woods, and waters, and grand hills, for the things they do not raise on the farm.

The neighbors say there is too much erudition and not enough top dressing. I know there is erudition,

and great learning, and other high forms of mental cultivation. The privilege and power of association have not been without benefit. One was my classmate in college, the other is a relation by way of advantageous marriage. Whenever I visit up here in the Monson lake country I always go away with great reluctance, an impression of charming hospitality and beautiful landscape, a sense of educational uplift and the memory of under-developed Golden Bantam corn.

Schoodic, Sebois and Sebec are big lakes on the southeastern fringe of the Moosehead group, inland sea resorts of Dover and Foxcroft now joined, and other interesting towns of Piscataquis county, where dwell others of the good and the great, other than university professors. We might call this important chain the outpost of civilization. Things get wild and decidedly unerudite from here on. All around the southern environs of the big lake are interesting waters, and on the southwest the two main outlets, East and West by name, which unite in Indian Pond and thence run on to the sea in one great and powerful river, the Kennebec. The gorges and reaches of the upper Kennebec all the way from historic Norridgewock to the foot of Indian Pond make up some of Maine's handsomest scenery. The traveler to Moosehead by way of this branch of the Maine Central, the Somerset as we knew it in the old days, has this good fortune all along the line. It is

excellent preparation for delights to come, nature's foresight. One should always approach the Moosehead region by gradation.

There is no territory of equal extent in the State, none, I venture, in any state of the Union, like that wild and interesting tract extending west to east from Moosehead to Millinocket, south to north from Sebec to Churchill. It is dotted everywhere by small lakes and ponds, hundreds in number, and interlaced with small streams and brooks, probably thousands in number and running in every direction. There are many waters that have never been seen by either white man or Indian. Only the birds know their secrets. And towering here and there, not in chain but in wildest irregularity, the wildest of mountains.

And what names have these strange waters! Names of romance, some of them, even in these late days, of mystery! What interesting speculation! Jo Mary, for instance—Upper, Lower and Middle Jo Mary, Jo Mary Mountain and Jo Mary stream. Wish I could have known Jo. Must have had character, Jo! And Pemadumcook, Ambajejus, Ripogenus, Penobscot; Ragmuff and Tumbledown Dick; Kidney and Chimney, Rum and Nigger; Shinn and Scraggly; and—among others present—Sourdnahunk and Stink. What history in names like these! They tell me, up here,—men who have lived here, lumbered here, hunted and fished here, men who say

they know—that there is a good reason for every name. Interesting country, indeed it is!

Chesuncook and Chamberlain, two great lakes of curious elongation, are the most important waters of the northern border of the Moosehead group. Chesuncook, eighteen miles long and in some places three miles wide, is often called the West Branch Bulge. This arm of the Penobscot runs in on the northwest, and out on the southeast. It is an important body of water in the upper operations of the Great Northern Paper Company, whose camps and good roads have done so much for the comfort and convenience of sportsmen in the Moosehead region. Chamberlain lies on the other slope of the east and west divide of northern Maine and its waters flow through the Allegash river to the St. John. You are still up north here, and going north, but nevertheless from now on it is always down the Allegash, down the St. John.

Only small and infrequent clearings now. Soon these disappear. Tote roads, Indian trails, abandoned camps of hunter, trapper and lumberman, last signs of man's advance into the wilderness, then nature—and nature unconquered and alone—unexplored lakes, the rush of many rivers, great rapids, mountains, and endless, trackless, overpowering forests—everywhere. To emerge—down the Allegash, down the St. John,—into another country, almost into another civilization. Historic French

Canada—the excitable, gesticulating, interesting, romantic French Canadian. By Gar!

III

Katahdin is a mountain, and a mountain is "an elevation higher than a hill, and often abrupt but without great extent of surface at its summit." A purely vegetable and mineral production therefore, earth, rocks, trees, shrubs, grass and moss. But this particular mountain is just as much a part of this lake system as any of its wonderful waters. More than a part—it is a feature. It should be a park, a public park owned by the State and maintained by the State for the financial benefit and pleasure of all the people of the State. And will be when all the compromises are adjusted, when big business learns and bends, when the small exigencies of small politics disappear, and we all get in that state of mind wherein community interests are recognized not only as esthetically superior to personal interests but materially advantageous to the individual. This is just as much one of the inevitables as sunshine and storm. The arrangements are matters of detail. Another plain case where State esthetics mean more State business.

All up and down the Moosehead country we have been under the spell of Mount Katahdin. It stands up in the wilderness a living, personal thing, dominating mentally, dominating physically. Day and

night you feel its commanding presence. Its horizon is the Canadian border on the north, Penobscot Bay and Mt. Desert on the south. More bodies of water that properly come in the denomination lake can be seen from its summit than from any other mountain in the United States. Probably, if we knew the whole truth, the Western Hemisphere and not the United States, would be the limit. Moreover, you can see Katahdin from quite two hundred lakes and ponds and countless rivers and streams, and I never heard or read of a mountain anywhere of which this could be said.

"On a bright day it seems as if every lake in Maine was heliographing to the summit," says Allen Chamberlain, expert high up in the Appalachian Club. Mount Washington is highest in New England, more than six thousand feet; Katahdin is second, more than five thousand feet. But there are more worth-while, interesting, physical and historical facts about Katahdin than all the other mountains of the East put together. It has all that any other mountain has and in addition many things possessed only by itself, peaks, plateaus, massive rocks, great basins, ponds, springs, vast chasms, caves, great cliffs, precipices, defiles, forests, white water of falling stream, trails of history and mystery, massiveness, grandeur, inspiration. And mythology of a great and disappearing race. For Pamola, topmost peak, cast sinister spell over all the Indians all about,

and none ever dared approach it. It stands alone in a country vast and primeval. There are no minors to dwarf its great height.

The view is uninterrupted. Great distinction undeniable. No mountain climber, no mountain admirer, no mountain itself can ever detract the smallest fraction of an iota from the grandeur and massive beauty of Washington. It's a whale of a mountain. But! From whatever point of view, whatever the distance, whatever the atmospheric conditions, one can never avoid the impression it is the biggest whale in a school of other big whales. Katahdin schools all by itself. There are no comparisons—lonely, austere, dignified, intensely interesting, mysterious aristocrat of the great mountain family.

Not many men have ascended its peak. It is not child's play of a shady summer afternoon. Nor yet a simple matter of physical endurance. Plus this, courage, science, the mountain instinct. Turner, in 1804—the pioneer, first of whom there is any record —without any aids to sight counted eighty-seven lakes. He was followed by Theodore Winthrop, first so far as known to produce definite writings. Then in 1836 and 1837 a mountain professor from West Point and a geologist from Massachusetts. Only two others in the next decade, young Bostonians. And then, 1846—eventful year—Thoreau, the

master, who gave the best part of a book to the glories of Katahdin. And says:

"Some part of the beholder, even some vital part, has seemed to escape through the loose grating of his ribs as he ascends this mountain. His reason is dispersed and shadowy, more thin, subtle, like the air. Vast, Titanic, inhuman Nature has got him at a disadvantage, caught him alone and pilfers him of his divine faculty. She seems to say sternly, why came ye before your time? This ground is not prepared for you. Is it not enough that I smile in the valleys. I have never made this ground for your feet, this air for thy breathing, these rocks for thy neighbors."

Since then, of course, other adventurous spirits of note and infrequent literature. Compared, however, with the number that each year ascend the other famous mountains of New England they are very few.

But the one man who has Just Talked more Mount Katahdin into me than any other, more eloquently and feelingly than any of the other great mountain poets, with more recent on-the-ground experience and observation than any other of the great mountain climbers, is Arthur Staples, editor, author, of prodigious endurance—pen and legs—great lover of his State, who—delightful Jack-in-the-Pulpit that he is—preaches Maine and more Maine, six days in the week and on the seventh rests to gather more

strength to proclaim the welcome gospel. Just Talked it by the hour, on his porch, or mine, in the Mossery, in the library, Fred Dodge's store, on the South Shore, on the tennis court, on the ball field. Most of all, and, but for the lack of genial companionship, best of all, in facile writing. Among other things—many other things—good and true:

"This day, on Katahdin, in an amphitheatre of mountains, high on a plateau five thousand feet above my own dear State of Maine, these emotions measurably returned. I felt awed and alone. I felt spiritually uplifted. Who are you, said I, that you should doubt? Who are you that you should fear? These things are enduring. Here is manifest God.

"I could not see Moosehead for the haze, although Thoreau says he saw it to the 'southwest, like a silver platter at the head of the table.' Yet I could see the indistinct outlines of the Big and Little Spencer mountains that skirt the shores of Spencer Pond whose waters run into Moosehead near at hand. Chesuncook, eighteen miles long without an island, and shaped on the map like a prone saurian with head uplifted, looked through the summer day like a tiny coin of silver on the green cloth.

"And then spattered here and there from right to left, from Chesuncook to the Sourdnahunk and the Millinocket waters, gleaming waters, buried in the tree-tops and rivers running through them like threads of white. Dudley, the guide, named the ponds

that he could see and determine. I wrote them down and herewith copy them: Harrington Lake, Caribou Lake, Ripogenus Lake, Sourdnahunk Lake, Big Pond, Rocky Pond, Kidney Pond, Lily Pad Pond, Grassy Pond, Lost Pond, Slaughter Pond, Nanmakantee, Rainbow Pond, Carry Pond, Holbrook Pond, the three Debsconeags, Millinocket with its many islands, Pemadumcook, biggest of all in full view, 14 miles long, Abol, Upper Togue, Katahdin Pond (not the lake, which is toward the east), the wonderful Jo Mary waters gleaming to the south, with that peculiar effect of being above the horizon, three lakes, Upper, Middle and Lower, Jo Mary, Trout Pond, Pockwockomus.

"We stop for breath. Lakes are coming out of the haze everywhere we turn. 'Ambajejus,' continued Dudley. And then he named North Twin and South Twin, Ragged Lake, just to be seen faintly. Daisy, nearer at hand and shaped as it lies on the fair green, like a shirt spread out on the grass to dry. Elbow, well named for it is thin as a man's arm and is crooked at the elbow in exact likeness to its name. Henderson, far away, Lily Pad, with a strange rim of white around it, which I conceive to be lily pads half a mile deep all around its shores and gleaming in the sun. And more, smaller ponds, strewn like bits of shining glass everywhere in between—Fisher and Belly and Prentiss and Hurd

and Yokes and Weymouth and others on the map, which we could have located.

"Today, some weeks after coming from this trip as I write these words, I can feel yet the spell of Katahdin. I expect never to escape it. I hope never to escape it. I have seen other mountains; climbed a few here and there; but none is like this. It is solitary, wild, titanic—speaking a varied language to the heart and to the emotions. It is an old giant, battered and torn in a northern wild, without a peer east of the Rockies.

"Pomola! Haunted mountain of the Indians; Chimney Pond under the crags; embosomed in emerald, surrounded by rocks of pearl and jade! Abol! Overlooking the fair field of running waters! Sourdnahunk, mysterious and mighty, afar off! Monument Peak! set on edge over the chasms. Weird evidence of Titanic forces, written in loose stone! Wind-swept plateau, defiles and precipices, and roaring brooks and evening camp-fires!

"All remain in my memory; and as I shut my eyes, I can see the clouds making around Katahdin's tops and can hear again the sighing winds telling of the countless ages in which they alone have known Katahdin."

Three established trails lead to the mountain, Abol leading from the West Branch of the Penobscot, Hunt from Kidney Pond, and Lunksoo over on

the east side, taken from either Staceyville or Patten. The last named has the official stamp of the Appalachian Club and is best known perhaps among what may be termed the modern Katahdin climbers. It should be related, both for the sake of guide-book accuracy and the perpetuation of an important bit of Maine history, that if you go in by way of Patten you will hear the dialect story of a French Canadian lumberman whose mongrel retrieved a lighted stick of dynamite thrown into a Shinn Pond pool to produce a string of trout for supper. You can't escape it. It is one of the great legendary institutions of Patten and its surroundings. If you will take the word of a humble but appreciative traveler who has sat entranced by an air-tight stove all of a hundred times and heard this same story you will have no desire to escape it.

Governor Baxter ascended Katahdin two years ago by way of the east side trail and came out completely confirmed in his long contention for a public park and with new and effective ammunition in the campaign which he proposes to continue, whether in office or out.

"Today the conditions for the establishment of this park are ideal," he says. "The cost of the land should be low, as its value for timber purposes is trifling. The park is in the very heart of the mountain where the scenery is the grandest and most varied. Whatever timber there is on the slopes of the

mountain is so inaccesible as to make it valueless, for its removal is impossible; while at the base of the mountain in one section of the park is a new growth of poplar, birch and other woods, which in a few years will become of value, and when properly harvested will furnish an income to the State. The land will be worth to the State, as land only, all that it costs and will prove a good investment. Unlike certain great institutions of the State that are a constant drain upon its resources with their ever-increasing demands, this project will prove self-sustaining, and of increasing value in the passing years.

"The proposed park covers an area of 57,232 acres and comprises the whole of Mount Katahdin, and Katahdin Lake, of itself one of the most beautiful of all Maine's lakes, and which abounds with trout. The boundaries of the park can be extended later if succeeding legislatures deem such extension advisable. This park will prove a great attraction, not only to the people of Maine who will frequent it, but also to those who come from without our State to enjoy the free life of the out-of-doors. The park will bring health and recreation to those who journey there, and the wild life of the woods will find refuge from their pursuers, for the park will be made a bird and game sanctuary for the protection of its forest inhabitants.

"Maine is famous for its 2500 miles of seacoast, its countless islands, for its myriad lakes and ponds,

and for its forests and rivers, but Mount Katahdin Park will be the State's crowning glory, a worthy memorial and a blessing to those who follow."

The Governor is right, and will succeed. We shall all come to his way of thinking in time. The proper adjustments will be made and the only regret that can possibly follow will be for the present delay. The federal government has established a great national park on Mt. Desert Island within the confines of our own commonwealth, the only seaside park in the great national system. It is for our benefit and for the benefit of all the generations to come. The State that with justice and pride flies the pennant "The Nation's Playground," can itself well afford to establish a public park typical of its inland wild life and stimulating both to the business and pleasure of the great out-of-doors.

CHAPTER VIII

The Fish River Chain

I

THE first and last impression of the region north of Squa Pan is fish—fish all day and most of the night—of, for and by fish. You pass the time of day in terms of fish, business in terms of fish, existence in terms of fish,—all the time you are conscious and subconscious of fish, good old sporting salmon and trout fish. I say this in no small spirit of generosity, for on my first visit, the one that sticks in memory, I fished all day the fishiest of these fish lakes and never a click o' the reel. While next day, as I lazed in camp, my fishing companion landed fifteen as handsome salmon as ever graced the bottom of a canoe.

Quite all right. It's the Fish River Lake country. While in many other parts of the State names have ceased to have significance, up here they still stand for something. There are no caribou in Caribou, no Quakers on Quaker Brook, no squaws on Squaw Mountain. If there are lilies in Lily Bay I never saw one. No woman was ever known to dignify with her comely presence Female Pond, there are no Nahmakantas at Nahmakanta, and in all the hopefulness of this hopeful country no one has ever yet had the optimism to set a lobster trap in Lobster

Lake. And I still insist, for the third and last time, Stink Pond does **not** stink.

But here—here in this farthest north corner of Maine where we jut and butt into Canada in a friendly and neighborly way, according to Webster and Ashburton—it's different. We mean what we say. There are fish in Fish River. Mud Lake is muddy, Long Lake is long, and, if you don't look at the map, Square Lake is square. Frenchville is quite Frenchy, and I know personally and intimately that St. Francis, the gentlest and most gentlemanly friend that any man ever had, staunchest and truest, most loyal and most eloquent, has camped and canoed and fished and gunned and told many, and good, and long stories at St. Francis.

Furthermore and lastly, there was a real, sure-enough, honest-to-goodness Duke of Fort Kent. I sat side by side with him in the legislature and under his benign and patriarchal influence always voted for the flag and a generous appropriation for his town. Maine, you will recall, had statesmen in those days.

The second impression, and the one that leaves you next to the last, is lumber. This, too, is a big country, and big timber is one of its products. If you leave out of the consideration as a commercial venture the genuine human pleasure of the wild wide-open and the consequential restoration of the human machine—which, of course you should not—

timber is the one important product. I cannot remember the time in early days when the Fish River Lake country did not mean to me the romance of great lumbering operations, the thrill and excitement of river-driving, the wonder and mystery of adventurous and red-shirted spirits who tramped on snowshoes into the great unknown after fortune and sometimes fame. It stirred the imagination of young and old alike. It had all the elements of a California gold craze save one, the gamble of the quarry. No speculation about that. The timber was there.

How those old memories come back to us who lived on the fringe of this mystical life of the woods, of cant-dog and peavey—what's the difference, can you tell me?—of lean-to and bean-hole, of setting-pole and bateau, cook and cookee, stick-cooked pork and pilot bread with pork drippings, of one grimy pack of playing cards and high-low-pitch, and Pede; memories of the bag of spruce gum, the woodman's avocation, his one legitimate graft; of blow-down and slash, of deacon seat and duffel—of many other words and things now strange and unfamiliar, but whose merest mention revives us to the color of scenes of interesting history and tradition. Shades of Governor Coburn and Deacon Talbot—of Skowhegan, East Machias, Oldtown, Bangor! Bangor! Cosmopolitan clearing house of the forests! Free, wide-open, interesting, sometimes exciting, and

always generous Bangor, frontier city of the great big lumber country of the Northeast!

And memories of such men! How they loom! Swinging off the European and North American and making for Exchange Street that was, or Fred Johnson's that was, or dozens of other places that were, with a whole winter's wages burning holes in their pockets! Big, hairy, weather-beaten, broad-chested, two-fisted, masculine men; irresponsible, care-free, open-handed; magic men of the big woods.

Deacon seat! That reminds me. Rol Clark and I were skirting the western shores of Portage in vague imagination that we were also fishing. The night before we had entertained, educated and moderately uplifted an audience of eight in the spacious Grange hall at Ashland and had that satisfied feeling of accomplishment which includes among other agreeable sensations the firm conviction that you have earned a holiday. Compensation and balance make up an important part of the uplift profession. No uplift, no holiday. Conversely, marked, unmistakble uplift, a devil of a time somewhere, somehow.

We thought the elevation and possible final salvation of eight citizens of Ashland, including the janitor of the hall and the chairman of the Progressive town committee, entitled us to at least a day in the Fish River Lake country which was near at hand. But no fish. Too bad; we should have come yester-

day, or waited till tomorrow when they would be towing a big log raft down to the mill; or the day before yesterday, or the day after tomorrow, or any time next week, when of course we would be uplifting in some other county far away from the fighting Portage Lake Ouananiche. I am beginning to have suspicions. I don't think it is a matter of days at all, or weeks, or even years. It is a matter entirely personal. As a judge of bait I am on the ragged edge of conviction that I am a great electrical engineer.

So we reeled in and rowed ashore and cruised the tall timber on the banks of Fish River, and ate a delicious lunch which Mrs. Iverson had put up in evident expectation that it would be the event of the day, which it was. And came finally on an old logging camp which all the while has been the objective of this peregrinaceous preface. It was something of a ruin and apparently had been abandoned years ago. But the outlines of a camp of the old days were still there, and some of the furnishings; a tremendous cast-iron stove, a few stools, parts of bunks, and—

"There you are," said my companion in uplift, "the deacon seat! Sit down!"

"At last!" I exclaimed in delight. "All my life I've heard and read of the deacon seat. Now then, in the first place, is it 'deacon seat' or 'deacon's seat'?"

"Deacon. Don't you see? It's not a single seat, but a sort of settee, or bench, nailed on to the end of the bunk, toward the fire."

This was hopeful. I was going to learn something. I had always imagined it a big chair, stationary and next to the fire, the seat of honor in camp for the boss or some important guest.

"Well," I continued, "this is interesting. Now you were born in this country, and have always lived here except for a few years of education in the great educational centres which should at least not dwarf your understanding of a matter like this. Just what is the deacon seat?"

"Why—well—you see—this is the deacon seat."

"Thanks. So far, so good. Now let us go on the next step. Whence the name? And why?"

He finally confessed, and, as it turned out, it was not very humiliating after all. For in two days of inquiry all up and down and over and across this wild Aroostook woodland, the home of the deacon seat, the one place where deacon seats were born, lived and died, the deacon seat belt of the universe, we found not a single soul who knew why the deacon seat was called deacon seat. Not the captain of the little spruce-wood-burning steamer, not one of the hands at the mill at the foot of Portage Lake—and all had worked in the woods—not the conductor nor brakeman on the down train, not the garage man, not even the waitress at the Ashland hotel. And as

we went on our uplifting way through Mapleton, Washburn, Perham and Presque Isle we found the entire population, men, women, children and the ten 1913 Progressives, consumed in overpowering ignorance of deacon seats.

Comes now the most remarkable confession of all, in the person of John S. Springer, who spent years of his life in the Maine woods, who lived in lumber camps, and worked in lumber camps, and knew all about lumber camps that any lumber camp denizen could be expected to know. So much that he boiled over into a long book of minute, technical but interesting detail called "Forest Life and Forest Trees," written in 1850 and published by Harper and Brothers in 1851, the very height of the deacon seat period. Which I now take down from a shelf in the northwest corner of the State Library, by kindness of the otherwise helpful Mr. Dunnack, another lumber historian who knows naught about deacon seats —and a clergyman, too—and copy, page 71, pp. 2:

"Directly over the foot-pole, running parallel with it, and in front of the fire, is the **'deacon seat.'** I think it would puzzle the greatest lexicographer of the age to define the word, or give its etymology as applied to a seat, which indeed it is, and nothing more nor less than a seat; but, so far as I can discover from those most deeply learned in the antiquarianism of the logging swamp, it has nothing more to do with deacons, or deacons with it, than with the pope.

The seat itself, though the name be involved in a mystery, is nothing less nor more than a plank hewn from the trunk of a spruce tree some four inches thick by twelve inches wide, the length generally corresponding with the width of the bed, raised some eighteen inches above the foot-pole, and made stationary. This seat constitutes our sofa or settee, to which we add a few stools, which make up the principal part of our camp furniture."

So you see the great woodsman of the middle century, the very man and the very time for the acquisition of this particular knowledge, the fountain head, the expert, the man of long experience, the man who not only habitually sat on deacon seats but always had one in camp furniture, knew absolutely nothing of the origin of the name. I have no doubt there is a perfectly simple explanation. It may and may not be interesting. But it is interesting to me, and strange, that in years of investigation, in season and out, in camp and in the bright camp lexicon of youth and old age, I have never found a single man or a single written word throwing any light whatever on this now important subject.

My brother Stringer—or is it Springer? Let me look at the title page. Springer—that's it! My brother Springer writes many other interesting things of life in the Maine woods. His style is quaint and old-fashioned and vivid, and the book is illustrated by rough and ready and rare wood-cuts of

the time which depict the very scenes you wish to bring back. Any attempt at reproduction would surely spoil the effect. If you are still further interested you must simply dig this old book out of some old library, as I have, and enjoy it first hand. The really remarkable thing about it is that the author, a man who worked in the woods for wages, a lumberman and river-driver, still had the talent and time to produce a volume of eighty thousand words which might easily be called a classic of forest life and forest trees. Apparently another great author who regards "poetry the refuge of cowards who dare not cope with the difficulties of prose," he still condescends to quote some unnamed muse to illustrate the persistency with which the idea of "rum" always runs through the minds of the loggers. This is the virile swing of mid-Victorian swamp verse:

" 'Tis when we go into the woods,
Drink round, brave boys! drink round, brave boys!
'Tis when we go into the woods,
Jolly brave boys are we!"

What valorous rhythm! How easy it must have been to yoke up the oxen or fell a monarch of the forest to that stirring, dare-devil refrain, "Jolly brave boys are we!"

I will quote once more—a description of the night life of the lumber camp of the roaring forties—and have done!

When North Winds Blow

"The winter evenings of camp life are too much abridged in length to allow a long season either for repose or amusement, in consequence of the lateness of the hour in which the men leave work, and the various matters which regularly claim attention. By the time supper is over and the nightly camp-fire built, sleep early invites the laborer to the enjoyment of its soothing influences. And oh! how sweet is that repose! The incumbents of downy beds, nestled within the folds of gorgeous drapery, might earnestly but vainly court it.

"Could you take a peep into our snug camp some evening, you might see one of our number, seated perhaps on a stool in the corner, with a huge jack-knife in his hand, up to his knees in whittlings, while he is endeavoring to give shape and proportions to the stick he is cutting to supply the place of a broken ax-handle. The teamster might be seen driving a heated staple, with jingling ring, into a new yoke, which is to supply the place of the one "Old Turk" split while attempting, with his mate and associates, to remove an immense pine log from its bed during the day; and as he strikes the heated iron into the perforated timber, the circling smoke, in two little spiral columns, rises gradually and gracefully, spreading as they ascend, until his head is enveloped in a dense cloud.

"There sits another fellow staring into vacuity, while between his lips, profusely covered with a

heavy beard, the growth of a quarter of a year, sticks a stub-stemmed pipe. Opening and shutting those ample lips, volumes of smoke roll out, like discharges from the side of a moss-grown battery, the very beau ideal of all that is exquisite in tobaccoing. Bestride the deacon seat, a little removed, sits the cook, with a large pan between his knees, with his shirt-sleeves furled, and in the dough to his elbows, kneading a batch of bread to bake for breakfast. The sweat rolls from his half-covered forehead, and, unable to relieve his hands, he applies now one elbow, then the other, to dry up the mizzle from his moistened brow.

"Yonder, at the further end of the camp, in close proximity to the fire, sits a lean, lank, little man, with thin lips, ample forehead, and eyes no larger than a rifle bullet, piercing as the sun, poring over the dingy pages of an old weekly, perhaps for the tenth time. Songs, cards, or stories possess but little attraction for him. Intellectually inclined, but miserably provided for, still the old newspaper is a more congenial companion for him.

"Behind the deacon seat, lounging upon the boughy bed, you may see half a dozen sturdy fellows —the bone and sinew of the crew—telling 'yarns,' giving expression to the buoyancy of their feelings in a song, while the whole interior of the camp is lighted with a blazing hard-wood fire, which casts upward its rays through the capacious smoke-hole,

gilding the overhanging branches of the neighboring trees. All within indicates health, content, and cheerfulness."

One day at Norcross, in these modern times, I saw a carload of "woodsmen" going in for the winter's work, every man-jack recruited in Salem Street and Scollay Square. It looked like a pen at Ellis Island. How different! But of course the personnel of a lumber crew is one of the problems for which economic conditions, and not the bosses, are responsible. It is one of the big handicaps, and the operators have to produce in spite of it. Imagine, if you can, the relative axe-swinging capabilities of John Springer and Pasquale Antonio Spionetti and you will appreciate one of the present-day difficulties of lumbering in Maine.

Still there has been steady and marked improvement in this great Maine industry in the half century. While overcoming labor and other troubles the larger concerns have found time and energy to advance along other lines of economy and efficiency. Conservation, scientific and effective, has taken the place of the wastefulness of years ago. The operator of today has a business eye to the future and is treating his forest lands much as the farmer treats his tilled lands. The result is that fire and not the axe is the greatest danger in the Maine woods today. Forests, as well as lakes, are great natural storage basins for rivers and their importance in the

conservation of water power, another great industry of the State—in a few years perhaps the greatest—has at last been recognized and studied.

Hydro-electric energy is no longer a by-product of the lumber operator. It is an important part of his business. Protection of large timber areas thus has a two-fold purpose. The lumberman is learning with each year's experience, and while his predecessor of fifty and sixty years ago was careless, extravagant and wasteful, he, the modern, is a student of wood and water economics and is not too proud or stubborn or plain back-woodsy to learn something out of books and the experiences of other men and other times. He has found it useful not only in the matter of power but also in the matter of better and greater and more lumber crops.

"This is not speculation at all," said an important operator. "It is the demonstration of hard fact. To pursue any other policy would be destructive. Plain as the noonday sun. Trees require room like any other plant, air and sunshine. Thin them out as the vegetable farmer thins out his lettuce and onions and beets, and the crop is increased. If we completely clear a tract it will be anywhere from forty to six years before it can be operated again. If cut carefully and properly it can be lumbered with profit four or five times in that period instead of once."

If only the portable mill operator, who so often and so ruthlessly slashes into the Maine landscape, and moves on to the next scene leaving nothing but an unsightly blotch of sawdust and slash and oftentimes conflagration—if only he would take a leaf out of the book of this baron of the big woods!

II

The tip-top fringe of Maine is the international boundary line between the United States and the Dominion of Canada. It follows, please note, from St. Francis way around to the little town of Hamlin, the glorious sweep of the St. John River. And while we are here, as far up in Maine as we can get, it should be remarked with as much modesty and restraint as the inspiration of the landscape will permit that the scenery along this border, taken either by motor car or steam train, is just about the best of its kind—its kind meaning the combination of curving river and woodland—that can be enjoyed anywhere in the eastern and northeastern country. It is one of those splendid bits that must be seen and cannot be described.

A friend of mine who has nothing to do but motor about New England with a high-power camera and an eight-cylinder lunch basket—whose name I have the newspaper instinct to print but for his intense, violet modesty (I'm having trouble to get even one of his landscape photographs)—a friend who drove

one clear, north-country July day down from Fort Kent to Van Buren told 'em that the beauty was wonderful and continuous for the entire distance, something he had never imagined and had no words to picture.

"I don't like to make comparisons," he continued, "but really the drive down the St. John makes some of our famous New England trails look like ordinary country highways."

Extend this drive on the west to St. Francis and the Michu Rapids and on the east below Van Buren and St. Leonard's down to the junction of the St. John and Aroostook Rivers and you have the northern and eastern boundaries of the Fish River Lake region. The Big Machias River and the Upper Aroostook mark the southern borders. The Allagash, now the route of New England's most famous canoe trip, lies on the extreme west and flows into the St. John a few miles below St. Francis. These wide limits include the wildest fish and game territory in the State, virgin forest and many waters that have never floated an Indian canoe.

In the old days, both in imagination and reality, we called the northern Moosehead country, with Churchill Lake its upper limit, the jumping-off place. So far as we Maine people knew by actual experience this was the end of the sporting world. We heard now and then of a few exploring woodsmen, trappers, commercial adventurers, but no one ever

thought of this great region in terms of pleasure and out-door recreation. If anyone ever jumped at the jumping-off place he jumped into the unknown. But now we have the landing-place, the Fish River Lake country, already far-famed and the objective of thousands of fishermen and hunters who are seeking something new in territory and wild and unusual in character.

The extension of the Bangor & Aroostook railroad to Fort Kent made all this not only possible but comfortable. You can ride right in to Wallagrass and all that Wallagrass means in lakes and ponds and streams and brooks and woods and salmon and trout and deer and partridge and black duck, and everything else of the wide-open north country, ride right in from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington and the South, right in to Wallagrass in state and the softest of railroad plush. Compared with other inland resorts in Maine this group has been thus easily accessible only a short time, but the public camps and small hotels are thoroughly comfortable and quite modern and efficient in service.

Then, too, the upper Maine enthusiast will tell you that because of the inaccessibility, up to the entrance of the railroad, the fishing and hunting are now the best in the State. Fly fishing and trolling are both in vogue on all the lakes and ponds of the region. The waters are cool here in the warmest of

summer months and the sportsman whose holiday comes in July or August will find himself in the height of the Fish River season and the weather most comfortable for his outing. This is our farthest north, be it remembered. The vacationist who neither fishes nor shoots, but who cares simply to loaf away the days and nights in the open amid scenes of wildest contrast, as far as possible in fact and in thought from traffic officers and cafeterias—he, too, will find in this country all that is delightful.

Here I am again in the sweeping extravagance, if not the very language, of the railway and summer hotel folder. I have to confess that I have been a constant reader of this literature for many years, some of it upside down and backwards. It is interesting, illuminating and educational, and ought to be translated into all languages, including the Scandinavian. Moreover, I have visited the country which it describes, the scenes of every one of these literary crimes. Not a visitor only; in many places I've acquired voting residence. And I take pleasure in stating in my annual report that these stories are not only true but they could say a whole lot more and keep still on the right side of the borders of exaggeration.

The Fish River Lakes proper are eight in number and not very elegant in name. Beginning on the southwest and south, Fish River Lake, on some maps Fish Lake and others Big Fish, Portage, St.

Froid, Eagle, Square, Cross, Mud and Long. Just plain names without any attempt to Indianize or citify. And just as well, if not better. The hardy, adventurous white men who discovered them have some rights. I'm glad no one ever attempted Echo or Silver or Mirror up here. This chain is really a chain, the lakes themselves the big links, the several sections of Fish River the small links. At the upper end Eagle, Square, Cross, Mud and Long are close together, connected by straits. Like all the other Maine groups the principal bodies in size and other characteristics are flanked by hundreds of small ponds.

There is no high mountain scenery in the Fish River country but the roll of the land sweeping down to the St. John, and the undulation of forest parted every few miles by rivers and streams and water basins large and small, lend all the variety to view that any landscape artist can wish. This character of landscape gives distinction to the group, and change from others where some high mountain has always seemed to be the dominating feature. The only elevations that assume the dignity of the name are Round Mountain at Rowe Lake and old Haystack down on the south range midway between Ashland and Presque Isle.

I say old Haystack in no undue spirit of familiarity. In those far-away times before the automobile became a common household implement in

The Fish River Chain

Aroostook county, when country roads could still be imagined and even mentioned as possessing none of those features that would induce one to mistake them for an endless chain of billiard tables, I acquired a sort of proprietary interest in this mountain. For one whole day and most of one thunder showery night I couldn't get away from it. And when, in the small zero hours we finally landed, not in a garage but in a livery stable in Presque Isle, the boy whom we aroused out of a horse-blanket and harness-oil slumber showed sympathy for our plight by remarking: "Say, when I worked in Portland I used to know another deep-sea diver, Nat Gordon. Ever work with him?"

No mention of this far-north Maine country can be made without including the interesting Swedish colony north of Caribou and east of the Fish River chain of lakes, all of whose members are good 100% United States citizens, earnest, law-abiding, thrifty, and enterprising. They founded the towns of New Sweden and Stockholm and the little towns of Jemtland and Westmanland now make up part of their territory. The second generation is now in command, and altogether it is one of the most successful experiments in colonization ever attempted in the country. The descendants of the first settlers have gone to many other parts of the State and some of them to other parts of the nation. Wherever they have settled they have become important

factors in the community, noted for industry and sobriety and all that makes for sound American citizenship.

All these many years I have had great personal interest in this colony. For in boyhood, at my own home where he was often a visitor, I heard William Widgery Thomas many times tell the romantic story of its coming. It touched all my youthful fancies and made impressions that were never forgotten. And, strange and pleasant coincidence, only a few years ago and half a century after the event, I sailed many glorious summer afternoons on the Maine coast with Mr. Thomas, now eighty years old, gray, but erect, strong and vigorous, and vivid in description. We had for shipmate his classmate, Dr. Dingley, who stirred him on to interesting reminiscence. I had seen him only once and then at a public meeting, since those boyhood days, and was astonished at the youth of his old age.

We had him retell the old story in all its details. How, after many vexatious delays, he obtained from the Maine legislature the necessary land grants; how in Sweden he himself made up the party, selecting three score men and women, of north country health and vigor, capable, resourceful, strong and serious-minded; how they sailed away to the promised land with all their belongings, were taken in flat-boats up the St. John River to Fort Fairfield, thence by ox-team into that part of the Aroostook

wilderness which at once became and still is the town of New Sweden; how, ever hopeful, always cheerful, they cleared the forest, tilled the land, made homes and established a community which has ever since been a credit to themselves and their adopted state. It was easy to appreciate that Mr. Thomas himself, always in the van of this interesting pilgrimage, was not the least of its picturesque features.

And so one day I found a friend in Caribou who knew intimately all the older members of the colony and we drove in, and over good roads, to the little town where I could see for myself. It was a boyhood dream come true. Only fifty years, and a large, well-established and prosperous community; handsome farms, clean white houses with green blinds, extensive and well-arranged farm buildings, stores, a large grange hall, school-house, church and other public buildings in keeping; and all about evidences of neatness, thrift and wholesome country prosperity and genial country comfort; and, best of all, generosity, public spirit and warm and genuine hospitality! I found old men and women who remembered with pleasure and rehearsed with enthusiasm their coming and early days of toil, young men and women who looked into the future with welcome and hope and a spirit as truly American as any that can be found in all this broad land. It

was a cheerful day—that day in New Sweden—educational and inspiring. Many a good lesson in that little town!

The Fish River country is Aroostook's contribution to the resort wealth of Maine. Generous, as always. The railroad and new and better highways have opened wonderful regions of waters and woods and the vacationist has not been slow to appraise and appropriate. Sea salmon have been caught in the Aroostook River. All the lakes, ponds and streams have trout, and in many togue and whitefish have been reported. "Some of the waters," says one expert, "furnish trout rivalling in size the famous Rangeley fish."

In the important matter of hunting big game and birds, the territory is unsurpassed in Maine, and that means unsurpassed east of the Mississippi. The region includes on the north the St. John valley and on the south the great basin drained by the Aroostook River. Topographically the whole country is most interesting, the combination of lakes, rivers and forests being well-nigh perfect. As a sporting proposition it cannot be beaten. For the grand delights of camping and canoeing the waters of these two valleys have no rivals.

No traveler can resist the broadening and pleasant influences of Aroostook as a community. Out of its wide reaches comes a peculiar inspiration that

cannot be quite defined. Life here seems to be free and broad, open-hearted, open-handed. The narrow, confining limits of time are not in the consideration. Clocks and watches play no part in the social system, and small part in the business scheme. The hospitality is free-handed, sincere and characterized by that genuine spirit of homeliness that makes and cements friendship.

I have traveled its highways and byways, always with a sense of security and human, neighborly intimacy, always with the feeling that these people are my people, and, if their ways are not my ways, I wish they were. And departing—always with the lingering regret that the days had not been more days, and longer.

CHAPTER IX
Grand Lakes

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Grand Lakes

I

OUT ON the end of a little point of land in a little fresh-water pond, in the little town of Dennysville, one summer afternoon, I came by accident on the little camp of the littlest boys I had ever seen living on their own resources in the woods. One was ten, the other twelve. Sun-browned, sturdy, well-put-up little chaps, hatless, stockingless, and otherwise close down to the working costume of the most interesting of the South Sea photographs. The prettiest little out-door picture I had ever seen. One was stirring the fire in a rock-pile, the other husking corn. Seemed a shame to break in. But one of them spied me, and did the thing that always comes first to a boy's mind—asked a question.

"Oh, sir, won't you please tell us what time it is?"

"Time? why, look at the sun, my man. That's the way the Indians and other out-door people tell the time. You must know that, old hunters like you."

"Yes, sir, we do. But Bob says it's four o'clock and I say it's five. We thought you might tell us which was right."

"Well, I'll tell you," taking out my watch, "but you mustn't get mixed up like this again. It's just half-past four this minute. And it's Wednesday."

"Oh, thank you." As gentle, polite, pleasant-spoken and many a bandit as ever packed a gun.

"There's another way you can tell. When you're hungry."

"I'm afraid that wouldn't do at all, sir. We're always hungry."

Well, well! Most interesting! A couple of philosophers! Here was I, off the beaten path for a jaunt on my own account and stumbling head-on on the original picnic institution. I must tell you more about it. In the first place these hardy, weather-beaten old tramps had taste. The spot selected for the camp was the most charming imaginable, a clean-swept, miniature cape sloping south and into the pond with rocky shores and, in a little cove at the base, the suggestion of a beach where a red canoe lay bottom up. While the camp itself seemed concealed in a clump of small spruces there was always a good view up and down the pond, and, as I settled down on a log for a visit and pow-wow, I noticed through a vista in the trees a large and comfortable white farm-house in the distance—and the distance was not great—whose front windows commanded a view of the point.

This was the connection with civilization, and the only safety-first suggestion I saw about the encampment. I learned afterwards, quite incidentally, that two mothers and one nervous aunt were trying to have a vacation in that farm-house. The tent was

one of those small, triangular khaki affairs sometimes seen on a town lawn, and just big enough for two small boys to occupy for sleeping purposes only. There were two narrow rubber covered mattresses, and they had so far slept with their feet and bodies inside and their heads out in the open, just as we used to sleep in cat-boats years ago on the coast.

"What do you do when it rains?" I asked.

"Well, it hasn't rained yet."

Further camp inspection revealed an abridged but sufficient cooking outfit, some tin plates and cups, knives, forks and spoons, salt and pepper boxes, two small frying pans hanging on a tree, a small hunter's axe, some highly aboriginal bows and arrows, and two country fish poles sticking up at the end of the tent. Besides two regular sporting goods store paddles there was another in the making, and cedar shavings were all about. The fireplace was made of two rock piles and over it hung the usual black metal kettle between two crotched sticks.

Everything seemed to be in regular form. My hosts had not only read all the camp books, but they had apparently learned by the experience of older campers as well. The whole scene was interesting and illuminating—and enticing. I wanted to settle right down there and spend the rest of the summer. It was just that kind of atmosphere. Everything looked good to me, and the smell of the camp-fire

carried me back many, many years. There is nothing like the smoke of an open-air wood fire to stir the memories.

The boys, it seemed, had spent many hours of winter and spring at home planning and preparing for these great days. The parents had turned them loose, and they had made all the arrangements and assembled all the equipment. They knew just where they wanted to go, and went. When I arrived on the scene they had been three days in camp, and aside from a sort of all's-well, keep-away wave to the farm-house each morning they had no communication with relatives and friends. Neither had experienced that quite natural feeling of lonesomeness and fright at night, and up to date the expedition had been a tremendous success.

As a matter of fact, the place was as safe as the most carefully guarded home nursery. It was part of their philosophy fully to appreciate this and they applied a common sense to the dark hours quite unusual in my time in boys of that age. The food question had been compromised by a big tin box of reserve supplies in the form of home cooking to be used in stress of weather or in case the waters of the pond and the surrounding gardens were not sufficiently productive. This reserve, I found, was getting low.

In the course of time and the grand march of events I received what seemed to me a most cordial

invitation to remain and partake of the evening meal. As I look back now I'm afraid I accepted with too much speed and eagerness for polite society, but at the time it seemed quite the thing to do. Having the appearance of an unshaven nomad of the forests with a pack on my back, they apparently asked me in a spirit of woods' hospitality, and, having in the pack a small assortment of fruit and sandwiches which I could contribute to the feast, I accepted in the same mood—the common mood of the al fresco brotherhood the world over.

"That'll be nice," said the older of the two boys who all the time had acted as spokesman, "we're going to have chub. Caught them today."

I emerged with flying colors from this embarrassment by explaining that it was close time on chub in Washington county for grown-ups but perfectly legal for boys. What was the matter with the corn?

"Oh, we're going to have that, too. And Bob will cook you some bacon. We've got a lot of that."

We all three got busy. The fire was soon reduced to corn-roasting coals, the table spread on a bed of moss, everything that had to be cooked turned out just as we expected, and we were soon seated Indian fashion and eating away like the hungry wolves of the boys' camping-out books.

"By the way, what's your name?" I asked.

"My name's Chester, sir. But we thought that wouldn't do out here. So Bob calls me Bill."

"Well, Bill, may I ask you to please pass the butter."

"Oh, we forgot to tell you. We're out of butter. It melted in the sun and we had to throw it away. But we've got some very nice salt."

Grand—grand was that banquet on the Cape of the Two Brigands! I have forgotten many others. I shall probably forget all others. Never this. Corn—bushels of corn, white, yellow, brown and black, with black the predominant color; bacon, done, underdone and overdone; chub—plenty of chub for those who liked chub and who could legally eat chub—chub fried in bacon—chub fried in chub—some chub not fried at all; three big, black, roasted-on-one-side, unbuttered but highly salted potatoes; my own modest offering of one banana, one orange, two cheese sandwiches and two dry, hard, summer hotel doughnuts.

Did I say grand? Pale and inadequate! Not the word. It was magnificent. Not all the feasts of history, not all the feasts of the ages to come could satisfy like this feast. Company as well as abundance and the climax of culinary art. And what company was this! For an hour we sat cross-legged around the little black rock-pile. And talked of the woods and waters, of white men and Indians, of moose, and bear, and deer, and wild ducks and wild geese; and fish—salmon and trout—and chub; of canoes—war canoes and peace canoes—of guns, and bows and arrows, and spears, and cedar fish poles.

And stood up, and shook hands—in silence—each with the others; and then vowed eternal friendship, the life-long, Leatherstocking alliance of the everlasting woods. Bowing low. On my way.

On a little hill up the path, where through the spruces I could still see the camp, I turned to signal a last farewell. Bob waved a frying-pan, Bill a dish towel. Three times around.

II

The smell of the salt water gets up into this Grand Lake country. Now and then you pass a story and a half white house connected with a barn twice its size by a long, low shed with open spaces on each side, piled to the roof with stove wood, sawed three times and split fine. A narrow, grass-grown gravel path runs up from the road to the thin granite front-door steps, and on these wrought-iron mud-scrapers, rusty and worn. On each side of the door a tremendous white and pink sea shell which the children lift up to their ears to listen to the rote of far-away and mysterious oceans. Under one parlor window a syringa, under the other a snow-ball; around on the south side spirea.

It is a little farm, no more than forty acres, neat, trim, well-kept. The vegetable garden, small berry patches and orchard are in proportion. If you will step off the narrow piazza into the kitchen you will note on the left, hanging on the wall in a conspicuous place, a big, old-fashioned brass barometer.

This tells the story. Any one might have the sea shells as curiosities. I have seen them in many farm-houses and village houses many miles from the coast whose inmates had never seen or been near the sea.

But this old barometer—quite different! This is the home of a retired sea-captain; a type to be found frequently, almost always a few miles inland, in all the coast counties of Maine, York, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Knox, Waldo, Hancock and Washington. The last harbors of grand old men who have been off-shore for the last time and are now settled down to the ease of a calm, unruffled twilight. But just why a few miles inland, almost always out of sight of the ocean itself, but near? I often wondered and never knew until one day I asked Captain Bennie Seavey who sat under the shade trees on the very place I have just described, smoking a tremendous, straight-stemmed meerschaum pipe and twirling a low-hanging gold watch chain big enough to serve a ship's anchor. Everything was big about Captain Bennie, except his farm.

"Well, you see," puffing and looking off to the south, "you see, it's just this way. We want a change, but a change that's not too far away. Every deep-sea-going captain I ever knew was always dreaming of settling down on a little farm. Every blow he was in the little farm loomed big. Every foreign harbor he entered the old home town loomed bigger. It got to kind of being second nature to

keep thinking of a place just like this. When he lays up and comes ashore for keeps he sort of thinks he's had enough and never wants to see the old deep blue again. But before he buys and settles down he has a feeling he can't quite explain that it won't do at all to go far back. I'd rot out in no time if I didn't know I could drive down in half an hour and get a look. May not do it more'n once in six months. But it's comforting—and I'm not sure but it's life itself —just to know it's there."

All around this fine old county of Washington, which includes within its confines the Grand Lake group, one always has the feeling that it is there—there, just over the hill, around the corner, down the road—the comforting, worth-while, eternal salt sea—quite true, to some of us life itself. It gives a variety to this particular lake region found nowhere else in Maine, substance, solid base; in other terms, holding ground, both anchors; an easy sub-consciousness that if everything else fails there is always this —and this is something real.

Sometimes the Fundy fogs make up the St. Croix valley and over the lakes and ponds. Then you know it's there. Shoulder, down here—color, flavor—the far and wide travelers persist in calling it atmosphere. There is always, too, a kind of old-fashioned, old-world personality that stimulates every human feeling, that attracts and attaches. You feel that this is Cornelius Sullivan's adopted country, Barney McGouldrick's. If you have any

sense of the old-time humor at all, you are at home at once, and all the time.

All this, mind you, in addition to about the best hunting and fishing to be found anywhere on the continent. On the continent! I know very well how that sounds—narrow, provincial, boastful—even childish, countrified. Quite all of these if the expression were mine and mine only. It is not only not mine, but was used in reference to the Grand Lakes by a man who has done as much hunting and fishing in different parts of this country as any you know. And he does these so well and with so much skill and enthusiasm that it is a shame for him to attempt anything else—playing the violin, for instance.

Officially speaking, the Grand Lake country is an acute triangle which includes the whole territory south of Presque Isle and Fort Fairfield drained by the St. John and St. Croix Rivers and, spreading out in the south, all the fresh waters of Washington county. The lower Penobscot is the western boundary, the St. Croix and Passamaquoddy Bay the eastern, the Atlantic Ocean the southern. In area it is the largest of the six Maine groups, and as a sporting proposition pure and simple, there is none more interesting or productive. Up in the apex of the triangle, along the New Brunswick border north of Schoodic, big game is abundant and old Maine hunters for many years have called this region the best in the State for this particular sport.

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The Grand Lake country habit is confirmed and apparently incurable. I have an old friend, by the way, a deep-sea-going old salt who has lived all his life on the coast and nowhere else, who for thirty-two years has been as regular at Lambert Lake as the month of November. He goes in on the same day each year, on the same train to Enfield, by the same tote-road to camp, with the same equipment and for twenty of the thirty-two years with the same Indian guide. Since then he has worn down two others of the same family. He always comes out with the same amount of game, which means all the law allows.

The only unusual incident to break the routine of almost a third of a century was Armistice Day. It happened to be one of those clear, calm days in eastern Maine when the atmosphere carries sound a great distance. I have heard that this sound-carrying quality is peculiar to this part of the State but have never had it explained. The camp at noon plainly heard the celebration at McAdam Junction twenty miles away, the cannon and even the bells. Knowing that it was about time for the Germans to sign, here my friend and his guide sensed the end of the world war, opened two bottles of ginger ale, danced hand in hand around the camp-fire, fired half a dozen rifle shots and then settled back into the routine of the years.

When North Winds Blow

There are two natural subdivisions of the Grand Lake region, the northern, or upper as it is familiarly known, which comprises the Schoodic Lakes proper, the headwaters of the St. Croix and all that territory running north into Aroostook county, and the southern, or lower, which includes the western Grand Lake system, all the waters of Washington county and extending southwest to the lakes and ponds of Hancock. There are names here, too, to interest and puzzle the lexicographer, Sysladobsissus, Pocumpus, Musquash, Meddybemps, Skiticook, and—think of it—Pocamoonshine.

The most interesting of the waters of this region are so little known to the traveler and sportsman that some detail may be found helpful. The federal government has made surveys of Maine waters which the business man and vacationist will find interesting and useful. I hereby credit, and condense one of the best reports on the Grand Lake country.

Commencing at the north of this upper subdivision the most important waters are tributaries of the St. John: Rivier de Chute, Goosequill Creek, Presque Isle River, Meduxnakeag River. A few miles south of the northern sources of the Meduxnakeag is a group of lakes near Island Falls forming a part of the head-waters of the Mattawamkeag, a tributary of the Penobscot. The Mattawamkeag is formed by the West and East branches. The former rises in a group of lakes in

Grand Lakes

Moro and vicinity; the principal being Picked Mountain and Rockabema Lakes. Rockabema is the largest, being about two miles long by one mile wide. Just before reaching Mattawamkeag Lake it receives the waters of Caribou and four other lakes at the south. The West Branch is so extensive that the portion above Mattawamkeag Lake drains an area of fully 400 square miles. Mattawamkeag Lake near Island Falls, is the receiving basin of these waters. The lake is very irregular in shape with some good-sized islands. It is about eight miles long and two miles wide in the widest place. From the lake the West Branch flows southeast to its junction with the East Branch near Haynesville. The East Branch has its extreme source in the neighborhood of Smyrna. Near Ashland Junction Spaulding Lake empties into it and further south it receives the waters of Pleasant Pond and Skiticook Lake into which Mud Pond empties. Ten Mile Lake outlet unites with another branch from the neighborhood of Skiticook Lake to form a tributary going to East Branch a few miles south of Skiticook stream. From Haynesville the Mattawamkeag flows southeast for about seven miles where it bends to the southwest to join the Penobscot at Mattawamkeag.

The most important tributaries are from the north side of the river and are included in the upper Penobscot region. On the northeast corner of Amity starts a small stream, the headwaters of the

Cheputneticook, St. Croix River and Schoodic or Eastern Grand Lakes which form the boundary between Maine and New Brunswick from this point to Passamaquoddy Bay. This little stream flows into North Lake, a small body of water three miles in diameter, lying mostly in New Brunswick. From this lake a connecting stream of some two or three miles in length flows into the largest of the chain of Grand Lakes which form almost one continuous body of water to Vanceboro where they debouche into the St. Croix. The total length of the chain by channel route is about 42 miles. Lambert Lake near Vanceboro empties into the St. Croix at Little Falls.

The most important waters of the lower subdivision are the Western Grand Lakes, the source of the Schoodic or West Branch of the St. Croix. The region is about 50 miles long through Schoodic River, Lewey's, Long, Big, Grand, Pocompus and Sysladobsis Lakes with their connecting streams and thoroughfares. With a few short portages an almost continuous canal passage can be made from Princeton, at the foot of Lewey's Lake to Passadumkeag on the Penobscot River, a distance of over eighty-five miles. Grand Lake, the largest of the group, is about twelve miles long by six miles broad in the widest places. At its western end it receives through the thoroughfare the waters of five or six small lakes lying northward in the towns of Carroll and Kossuth and in townships 5 and 6.

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Other connecting lakes are Pocompus, Sysladobsissus and Sysladobsis at the west, and Mabawsoos at the southwest. These tributary waters are similar in their main characteristics to Grand Lake. Sysladobsis is the largest, being somewhat over fifteen miles long, and very narrow. Grand Lake Stream is a rapid, rocky river with numerous gravelly shoals. It is about two and one-half miles long, connecting Grand with Big Lake. Big Lake differs somewhat in character from Grand Lake, being shorter, narrower and shallower. It is separated into two parts by a rocky thoroughfare. Schoodic River flows from Lewey's Lake in a direction a little north of east and joins the St. Croix at the upper end of Baileyville. The main tributary is Tomah Stream which joins the river a few miles below Princeton. Schoodic River is the only tributary of the St. Croix of much importance south of the Schoodic Lakes.

Tributary to Passamaquoddy Bay are several lakes and streams which were once important trout and salmon waters but are now almost depleted. The largest is Meddybemps Lake, the source of the Dennys River. The lake is about twelve miles long and five or six miles wide, of irregular shape, and contains several small wooded islands. It has an area of about 20,000 acres. Dennys River pursues a course of about twenty miles from the lake to Cadscook Bay, or Dennysville, and drains a basin of about 150 square miles. Boyden Lake is a small

body of water situated in the town of Perry, extending a short distance into the town of Robinston. It is about three miles long; its greatest width is two miles. The lake is the source of Little River which empties into Passamaquoddy Bay a few miles north of Eastport.

The remaining waters of the Lower Grand Lake region comprise those of Washington county which empty into the sea west of Quoddy Head. The principal streams in east and west order are East Machias, Machias, Chandlers, Mescongus, Pleasant River and Narraguagus. Several large and small lakes having an aggregate area of 20,000 acres form the source of the East Machias River. The Machias rises in lakes situated close to the Western Grand Lake system. Mescongus or Pleasant River rises in a small pond in Deveraux and flows southward into Pleasant River Bay. It has a drainage of about 110 square miles. Narraguagus River rises in a pond just south of Nicatous Lake and drains an area of about 215 square miles. It flows south into Narraguagus Bay in Milbridge.

Wide and wonderful territory for the fisherman! And the fisherman who makes this a specialty every spring tells me that every inch of it is interesting. Each year he finds new waters. The variety of lake and pond, stream and brook, to be found in comparatively short distances is the feature which he discusses most and with the greatest enthusiasm. Grand Lake Stream is famous for the sport afforded

by swift water salmon, as famous in fishing literature as the upper dam at Rangeley. This whole region inspires a sort of loyalty in sportsmen unusual in the other lake groups.

The Grand Lake hunter and angler always displays a certain pride of locality which puts him in a special class. He talks about it eloquently and plainly enjoys distinction. Just for pleasant instance: Walter Rich is a Maine naturalist of sufficiently long and wide experience not to be carried away by any local and momentary enthusiasms. An artist of wild life who has illuminated and made interesting many government reports, a vivid writer on natural subjects, an observer of north country birds and beasts and fish whose observations are worth while to the official scientists and of immense value to the amateur, and withal a next-door neighbor and hunting companion whose friendship is a liberal education, he is always bubbling over with just the out-door information you wish to know—and all acquired by personal experience on the spot. If you must know what, where and how to hunt and fish in Maine you must know him. I caught him late one night on a train coming up from way down east in Washington County. He was hungry and tired and actually looked ill. He had missed train and restaurant connections all day and had eaten nothing since five o'clock that morning. I began to sympathize.

"Don't do it, neighbor, don't do it," he quickly replied. "Instead of condoling, envy me. I've been fishing Grand Lake Stream."

This is one of Maine's delightful old-fashioned counties. There is a certain charm about its set ways that revives pleasant memories and keeps one in touch with the best of the old days. The smell of sawdust and green lumber mingles with the salt sea air, and old coasters and St. John wood boats creep from cove to inlet, inlet to cove. There is no coast line on any ocean quite like that from Frenchman's Bay to Grand Manan. Rough and rugged, treacherous and friendly, year in and year out displaying all of nature's contradictions, interesting, romantic, with a history running up and down the scale of both tragedy and comedy, that stirs all the human fancies. Calais and Robinston, Eastport and Lubec are the outposts. Beyond, the somber, severe black rocks of the empire whose morning drum-beat—how well you know the line! Solid, stolid bulwark of civilization! But it's another world.

CHAPTER X

The Gospel of the Open Air

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The Gospel of the Open Air

NO ONE more than I realizes the deficiency of this book. No one can tell me a single thing about its short-comings that I do not already know. I have just re-read for purpose of correction, and find that the first and greatest mistake is to pretend that it is anything more than friendly, fireside talk, one out-door man with another. And herewith do I correct. If it ever reaches the dignity and high estate to be found on the reviewer's desk he will say that it lacks the authority of the professional out-door man. Quite true. He will say there is no expert interpretation. Quite true. That the author is neither naturalist nor hunter, and not much of a fisherman. All true. That he is not a traveler and therefore has not the background necessary for fair comparison. Too true, alas! That he is not an artist, therefore why view his landscape o'er? More than true. It's notorious. If there are other requirements of standardized production—and there must be—delinquent defendeth not.

But if the gentle critic tries to tell you, or me, or anybody else, that the writer does not know the State of Maine, and has no good reason for stating that the State of Maine is good for what ails you, he will expose himself to the shafts of his own art. If I have attempted the prescription of anything

beyond this local specific it will be found in the reiteration of the general gospel of the open air. No one can be blamed for that whatever his failures as a non-professional may be.

"Give me health and a day and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous." Can anyone imagine in the wildest of flights that the great poet meant by a day anything but a day in the open? Can anyone imagine that in addition to being a great poet it was necessary for him to become a great scientist in order to appreciate, enjoy or even interpret? "I have scarce a day-dream on which the breath of the pines has not blown and their shadows waved." Can anyone mistake the meaning of this? His neighbor, Thoreau, sought not scientific discoveries, but the simple message which nature has for the common man. Walden was a pond, not a laboratory. We poets and philosophers must not be prevented from carrying on by lack of technical knowledge.

I had two friends who lived in New York and would never leave the city even in summer unless compelled by some necessity that was absolute. Nothing short of a funeral in the family could drag either one of them out of town. I may still have them as friends for aught I know. I use the past tense in case they cast me off when I bolted to the woods. They had no use for dandelions and song sparrows, frankly said so and bragged about it.

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They liked the big city and all the big city contained —the clubs, hotels and restaurants, cafe companionships, the opera, theatre, taxi-cabs, the endless chain of limousines, the steady tread of Fifth Avenue, the white lights of the bright corners, the human kaleidoscope, the ceaseless, relentless roar of the metropolis, day and night, year in and year out. All this was food, drink, lodging, music and poetry —life itself.

I have not seen them since January 1, 1920, but feel quite certain that the events of that date made little difference. The feeling was more deep-seated than mere superficial conviviality. Neither had any sartorial ideas beyond dinner coats and pajamas. They "talked beneath the moon and slept beneath the sun." If you have ever lived in New York you know the type. Now we have no quarrel with these men, Thoreau and I—and Jean Henri Fabre. We even understand them. But we object to their stubborn refusal to understand us, and the urban contention that the narrowness and provincialism and intolerance of the world is to be found in the woods and the open spaces, meaning by these the country.

On the other hand I have another friend who lives in the city, and you will see forthwith that have and not had is the word. He is a sculptor and philosopher. So talented in both of these useful occupations that the other sculptors actually call him a sculptor and the other philosophers endorse and

quote his philosophy. Chiseling out from some hand-written letters of mine, in his philosophical way, that I had taken to the country, not for a day but for a day and forever, he thus writes—and in the long-drawn out month of March:

"Really I envy you. Frankly, I wish more of us had the common sense and courage. Man is the only one among the animals that boasts an intellect. Utterly lacking in sense of humor he calls it 'superior intellect.' He sets up a standard of what this is, modeled wholly on himself, and then points to himself as the only earthly creature that has attained it. Whereas, as a matter of fact and undisputed history, he is the only damn fool among all the animals for having forsaken the ways of simplicity and happiness. He has deliberately created all of his own troubles from the time he began to exist—a perfect forward march of asininity.

"Verily, I'm beginning to believe G. B. S. who says the earth is, and can only be, the nut-house for the other spheres. Probably the kinds for which they have no use are handed over to the stork for delivery here. Go to it, you countryman! You may be one of the lesser nuts. Who knows?"

Now this is the man with whom I would talk by the fireside. And I pretend herein nothing more than the mere pointing out and reminiscence of places where we can enjoy the simplicity and happiness which he says the world seems to be struggling to avoid. As we pass on down the perspective

measured now by years we incline more and more to the pleasant habit of recollection. Old friends are best friends. We seek them out and recall to mind old days and best days, old places and best places. Memories come thick and fast, absorbing, overwhelming. There are none so gentle and strong, none so persistent and vivid, none so delightful, so completely satisfying as those which carry us back to the green spots of the earth out under the canopy of the heavens. If I have revived a friend to thoughts of careless hours in the open, it is all I attempted. If I have turned a stranger toward the possibilities of health and joy carried by the breezes of this northland, 'tis more than I hoped.

A man who finds it difficult to appreciate the significance of an overdue coal bill, makes a sorry figure in any attempt to discuss the grim logic of general economy. Yet I rush in to state that sooner or later the world must balance the account between the city and the country. The country has done business in red ink long enough. It is too easy to understand our two friends of the tall buildings who never knew the comfortable retrospect born of sun-burn; too easy to sympathize when they elbow the throng, or motor the avenue in slow and gorgeous parade, or dine in public, state and a crowd, or join in the tumult at one of Mr. Ziegfield's highly scented Follies, and exclaim, "This is life!" And

not easy enough to imagine them sitting on the shores of Damariscotta Pond and exclaiming, "This, too, is life!" The scheme is out of proportion. We country men struggle a great deal harder to get in line for a Winter Garden seat than the metropolitan to buy a railroad ticket for Somerset Junction. Each has something to offer to the other. The difficulty is to find some alchemist who will create and administer the proper mixture.

I have no doubt whatever that much of the fault —perhaps the greater part—lies at the door of the countryman himself. The small towns in this part of the country are becoming smaller while the large cities in all parts of the country are becoming larger, some of them so large, indeed, that the question of government is as serious as that of the nation itself. One well-known educator said the other day in a public speech that the trouble lay almost entirely in the inefficiency of the rural schools. Certainly the kind of education which the aged and middle-aged of the present day received in the rural districts in early youth was no stimulation to ambition and happiness, and no inducement to stay around home and grow up in the country.

Who was responsible for all the gruesomeness in the school books of those times? What on earth was the motive? Not long ago I came across an old Fourth Reader of just after the Civil War days. It was in the dimly lighted parlor of an inland country town in the heart of a lake country whose beauty

should have influenced the perpetrator of that room to better things. The saddest of the Rogers groups was the central figure, and all about were decorations in harmony. Death seemed to be the prevailing note. I remember particularly a small, glass-topped case containing the lock of hair of some long lost grandmother resting lovingly on a piece of white satin, and a motto in a walnut frame, worked in worsted and beads. The exact words I do not recall, and lest I should be accused of exaggeration I will not attempt to quote. But I do remember that the general trend of the argument was that we must all—every mother's son and daughter of us—watch out all the time because the Great Reaper was on the way and sooner or later would gather us in. It might be tomorrow—perhaps before this day ends—perhaps this evening, right after supper.

The Fourth Reader fitted right into this atmosphere. There was the good old "Death of Little Nell," "Little Benny," "The Bridge of Sighs," "Little Peterkin and the Skulls," "Napoleon at St. Helena," "Burial of Sir John Moore," "Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots," and that well-remembered masterpiece about the two little children carried to sea on a block of ice which begins: " 'A bitter cold night, Mr. Larkin,' said the captain, buttoning his southwester closely about his chest. 'Aye, a bitter cold night, sir,' replied the mate." Think of developing the latent elocutionary powers of little children on such cheerful literature as this!

In that same town one fall, a leading citizen, a man who had served on the board of selectmen and in this capacity had a voice in the management of schools, addressed to me the following remark: This I do remember, word for word, for I put it down in a note-book; and I feel rather guilty in quoting because the spirit was hospitable and generous. But some one must be sacrificed in the cause of advancement.

"Say, I and Cleve is goin' after ducks in the mornin'. We'll git ye one."

"But isn't it still close time on ducks?"

"Oh, him and me don't know no duck laws."

He played the original in the one literary joke that I was ever able to remember. When some one suggested that he give his wife a book for a Christmas present his reply was: "Huh! Guess agin. She's gut a book."

One cannot say with complete assurance that a revolution in the methods of rural education would establish the proper balance, but some change of system that would smooth off rough edges like this would give the country a better name. A knowledge, at least, of the fundamentals, and some slight degree of practice, would help us all in appreciating, and especially in interpreting, the wonderful blessings which nature has bestowed upon this State. I sometimes think the women are in advance of the men in this simple but important matter, and I always feel grateful to the Federation of Women's

Clubs for what they have done and are doing in presenting so well and so constantly the best that Maine has to offer.

* * * * * * * * * * *

In the æon-old conflict between land and water the fates decreed a drawn battle in this garden of the open-air gods. Peace came and each bowed to the beauty and grandeur of the other. Balance was struck. The rocks and the hills and the forests parted and made way. The waters mirrored back the glory of the landscape.

And so, when care sits by the elbow and weariness weighs, when crowds oppress and the day's work becomes irksome, the north winds blow and bring a message of hope and re-creation. The call is clear. There is no rest quite like this rest, no peace so satisfying. I wonder if we appreciate what and how much is awaiting us just around the bend.

THE END.

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